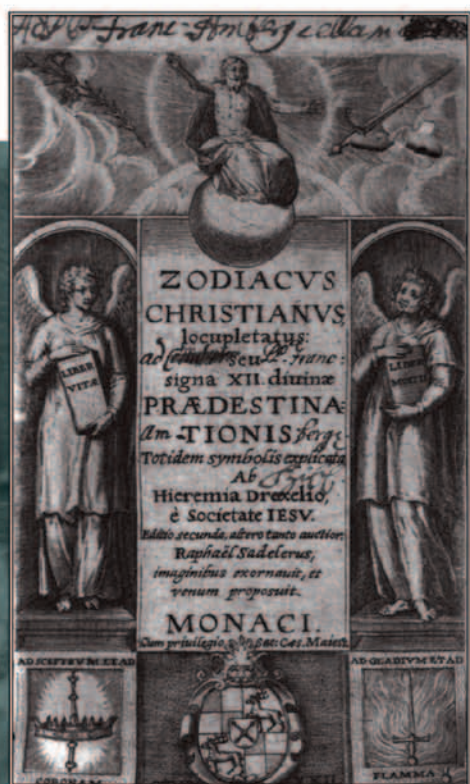


Jeremias Drexel's 'Christian Zodiac'

Seventeenth-Century Publishing Sensation.
A Critical Edition, Translated and with
an Introduction & Notes



Nicholas J. Crowe

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Seventeenth-Century Publishing Sensation. A Critical
Edition, Translated and with an Introduction & Notes

NICHOLAS J. CROWE

Centre for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, Oxford, UK

ASHGATE

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It was their encouragement and support which first generated, then fostered the fascination with Drexel and his writings that has culminated in this volume, in hopes that after several centuries those writings will become available once more to a wide readership.

Oxford, January 2013

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Introduction

Jeremias Drexel and the 'Christian Zodiac'

I

The case of Jeremias Drexel (1581–1638) is arresting on a number of levels. The life, works and circumstances of his extraordinary success as a preacher, professor, rhetorician and author combine to distinguish him as a uniquely intriguing figure in the cultural and intellectual ambience of seventeenth-century Europe. Born to Lutheran parents, he converted to Catholicism as a pupil at his Jesuit school, St Salvator in Augsburg, proceeding in due course to study philosophy and theology at Ingolstadt. Thereafter trained by the Society of Jesus, he became a novice in 1598 and a priest in 1610, saying his first mass in the monastery church of the Jesuits in Munich – St Michael's – at which moment his career as a preacher and orator began its striking ascent. Early public distinction in the art of allusive rhetoric, and a gift for energizing listeners, drew wider attention and in 1615 Drexel was appointed *Hofprediger* (court preacher) at the court in Munich of Prince Maximilian I (Elector of Bavaria in the Holy Roman Empire), where he remained until his death 23 years later. His exemplary command of oratory, in concert with an apparently awe-inspiring scholarly reach, is in plentiful evidence in some 34 principal publications, informed as they are not merely with the substance, but driven too by the brio and drama of his pulpit performances. These publications were invariably illustrated with emblematic engravings, and commanded an increasingly extensive readership with each passing year, notably appealing to Protestants as well as Catholics, appearing in multiple reprints, re-editions and translations across Europe during Drexel's lifetime and posthumously across the rest of the seventeenth century in an astonishing arc of popularity. The orbit of his readers' catchment was geographically – and denominationally – wide to a conspicuous degree. Drexel was among the most-read authors of that century, a genuine luminary in the culture of the German Baroque, and arguably the most published author of the period *tout court*. This, then, is already a compelling phenomenon: Drexel clearly possessed all that was required of a bestselling writer in his time – a fact of immediate significance. Today, he is not only no longer a bestseller, he has been almost universally glossed over, if mentioned at all, even in detailed discussions of the literary, theological or cultural environment in which he rose to such resounding prominence. His was a career authentically meteoric in both senses – brilliance preceding sudden obscurity – and so when we weigh the causes of

his contemporary celebrity and its impossibility today, we are obviously also assembling a picture not only of the man, but the world which he inhabited, and particularly the kind of cultural space which separates it so radically from our own. The light which his asseverations cast on that world (to use a figure occurring often in his emblematic meditations) spreads, therefore, further than the subjects directly addressed by him. The notion of stories behind stories and meanings behind meanings is, indeed, one which on the evidence of his illuminating texts he well understood, especially in regard of the urgent spiritual import of apparently everyday routines, deeds and things. What we take to be the 'real' is often a façade behind which the 'more real' things lie: our enemies, therefore, an over-familiarity with the world as we superficially apprehend it and vicious complacency. A work entitled *Zodiacus christianus*, published in Munich first as a homiletic digest in 1618 and then in a fuller, definitive version in 1622, with many reprints and editions thereafter, is exemplary in demonstrating how Drexel saw the world and his role in it. The phenomenon of Drexel is usefully addressed via an analysis of that text, because a discussion of what he understood by the notion of a 'Christian Zodiac', as a kind of object lesson, will suggest means of unlocking what has until recently remained cryptic about this uncommon individual and his writings.¹

Drexel, the 'indefatigable Jesuit',² not only wrote prolifically and at speed but managed to build a hugely fruitful relationship with a cohort of printers and publishers to ensure that his works reached their widest possible target readership. Such were the collaborative agencies by which Drexel's devotional and instructive works were to make him, as one observer has indicated, 'the most popular spiritual writer of the early part of the [seventeenth] century'.³ Other commentators have assembled statistics relating to his publication record

¹ For a conspectus of the life and times of Jeremias Drexel (Drexelius in Latin; *vulgo* Dresselius, Drechsel, Drexl, Träxl), see Karl Pörnbacher, *Jeremias Drexel. Leben und Werk eines Barockpredigers*, Munich: Franz X. Seitz, 1965. Also Heribert Breidenbach, *Der Emblematiker Jeremias Drexel SJ (1581–1638) mit einer Einführung in die Jesuitenemblemantik und einer Bibliographie der Jesuitenemblembücher*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1970.

² Peter M. Daly, 'A Survey of the Publications of the Bavarian Jesuits of the Upper German Province to the Year 1800' in Peter M. Daly, G. Richard Dimler and Rita Haub, eds, *Emblematik und Kunst der Jesuiten in Bayern: Einfluss und Wirkung*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2000, p. 53.

³ William V. Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1972, p. 221. For James Latham S.J. also, Drexel is the 'most popular spiritual writer of the early seventeenth century'. See 'Text and Image in Jeremias Drexel's *Orbis Phaëthon*' in Daly, Dimler and Haub, p. 85.

which give rise to even greater claims,⁴ all of them inviting serious scrutiny. Once established securely at court in Munich, Drexel initiated a publishing regime set to an arranged and relentless timetable, and in proportion with the demand beginning to be expressed by his burgeoning base of readers. If anything, his recognition at the highest official level quickened his populism, his rhetorical connectivity with every social stratum; the congregations which had packed his sermons now became the first generation of his readers, and in this way his star ascended far more swiftly than if Drexel the preacher had not metamorphosed into Drexel the writer.⁵ Throughout the 1620s and 1630s he was averaging one book per year (with an almost-simultaneous translation into at least one European language in many cases), beginning with *Zodiacus christianus* (original draft) in 1618 and *De aeternitate considerationes* in 1620: his two most widely-read works. Over the years these volumes, with one exception,⁶ were composed in Latin. Invariably, the scholarship is comprehensive, judiciously trawling the Greek and Latin reservoirs with which he was manifestly intimate – as a professor of rhetoric and the humanities variously at Munich, Augsburg and Dillingen – as well as Scriptural and exegetical sources. This core of erudition had been central to Drexel's life ever since his entrance into the Society of Jesus at the age of 17, in 1598, and his early days as a scholar under the guidance – *inter alia* – of Matthias Rader SJ, who became a close friend and mentor.⁷ By the time his career was properly launched some ten years later, Drexel was 'well versed in Sacred Scripture, ancient history, and a wide variety of literature. In some ways [a] man of the Renaissance, he made frequent use of his intimate knowledge of the Greek and Roman classics. His rhetorical repertoire included mythological legends, enigmas, plays on words, and stories, all of which he employed to illustrate moral

⁴ Daly, for instance, argues unequivocally that Drexel was 'the most published European writer in the [seventeenth century]': Daly, p. 53.

⁵ Drexel's favour at court, from 1615 to 1638, shored up his reputation and offered a form of security not generally available to scholars of an ascetic cast of mind during the upheavals of the Thirty Years' War. See Robert Bireley, *The Jesuits and the Thirty Years' War: Kings, Courts and Confessors*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 9. Bireley makes the point that Drexel's preaching did not stop with his court preferment: it continued in parallel with his work as an author. Both activities testify to his clear attachment to the diverse usages of rhetoric as an efficient mode of communication, and to his facility with those usages.

⁶ *Tugendtspiegel oder Klainodtschatz*, a panegyric published in German (Munich, 1636), occasioned by the death in 1635 of Maximilian's first wife, Elisabeth of Lorraine.

⁷ Pörnbacher, pp. 16–20. On Rader's role as educator of 'such outstanding literati as [...] Jeremias Drexel' see Hans Dieter Betz, *et al.*, eds, *Religion Past and Present*, Vol. 10, Leiden: Brill, 2009, p. 695.

lessons'.⁸ The primary intent, to re-acquaint his readers with the eternal verities in order to point up the significance of these holy truths to all aspects of their lives, was achieved by means of a winning marriage of grandiloquently freighted text and the emblematic engravings which accompanied it. As we shall see, his relationship with Raphael Sadeler the Elder (and in later years with Sadeler's three sons) was in this regard exceptionally fruitful.

There is some dispute about the identification of Drexel's first published work, and about the dating of a number of his shorter or less substantial pieces of writing, although the chronology of the principal works is now secure.⁹ The most recent bibliographer to address this question estimates that the earliest publications appeared in 1608 and 1615.¹⁰ From then on, Drexel's output consisted almost entirely of devotional or instructive works of spirituality, generally derived from his own sermons, although there is the occasional excursion into eulogy, sacred verse and drama. As *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* summarily states: 'He is remembered chiefly as the author of a long series of devotional treatises which went through numerous editions and translations and circulated equally among Protestants and Catholics.'¹¹ The prolific nature of Drexel's writing from 1608 until his death in 1638 is attested by fairly detailed extant records of his print-runs (and, even more compellingly, reprint-runs),

⁸ Latham, p. 85. On the significance to Jesuit pedagogy broadly of a humanist-style immersion in the Greek and Latin classics, see François de Dainville SJ, *La Naissance de l'humanisme moderne*, I, Paris: Beauchesne, 1940, pp. 158–60; also Joseph de Guibert, *La Spiritualité de la Compagnie de Jésus. Esquisse historique*, Rome: Institutum Historicum S. I, 1953, p. 321. With the assistance of Duke Albert V of Bavaria (Maximilian's grandfather) the Jesuits had established colleges at Ingolstadt in 1555 and Munich in 1559: see A.G. Dickens, *The Counter Reformation*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1992, p. 87. Drexel was to study or teach at both institutions. 'The University of Ingolstadt [...] became to Catholic Germany what Wittenberg was to Protestant [...] and] Munich [was] sometimes called the Rome of Germany': B.J. Kidd, *The Counter-Reformation 1550–1600*, London: SPCK, 1933, p. 132.

⁹ Pörnbacher, pp. 168–93.

¹⁰ Respectively, *Summa der tragoedien von Keyser Iuliano abtrinnigen* and a contribution to *Certamen poeticum. Super lessio mortuali germanico a variis vario carminis genere traducto*, a collaborative work involving three others. See Gerhard Dünnhaupt, *Bibliographisches Handbuch der Barockliteratur: Hundert Personalbibliographien deutscher Autoren des 17. Jahrhunderts*, I, Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1980, p. 573. Dünnhaupt's bibliographical work, and that of other modern commentators cited in these notes, integrates and supersedes that of Augustin and Alois de Backer, working first on their own and then re-edited by Carlos Sommervogel, whose collaborative late nineteenth-century researches culminated in the monumental *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*. Although still inspirational, this work has a number of errors and omissions in the matter of original information on Drexel.

¹¹ F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 508.

from which it is safe to infer a quite extraordinary degree of popularity and thence absorption into popular religious culture. The bookseller Cornelius Leyser (Leysserius), a close associate of Drexel's by virtue of his status as printer by appointment to Maximilian's court, remarks in his Preface to Drexel's *Noë, architectus arcae* (Munich, 1639) that between 1620 and 1639 a total of 158,700 copies of Drexel volumes were printed by the author's three preferred Munich publishers: Leyser himself, Nicolaus Heinrich and Anna Bergin.¹² A second edition of the work (1642) adds as a tribute to the exceptional author whose work – as it were – the reader now holds in his hands, that a further 12,000 copies of various titles had appeared in the meantime. Leyser specifies that up to and including 1642 he had sold 64,600 Latin and 42,400 German copies; Heinrich had sold 48,900 copies in aggregate, and Bergin 14,800 copies. These figures, remarkable enough in themselves, do not take account of other Munich-based publishers and printers who were known to be dealing with Drexel, nor with his publishers in towns further afield, such as Cornelius ab Egmond¹³ in Cologne, Nicolaus Heyll (Heyllius) in Mainz, and Joannes Cnobbaert (Cnobbarus) in Antwerp.¹⁴ Given that the population of Munich, Drexel's centre of operations, was at this time around 22,000, one might in fact begin to wonder whether saturation may not be a more apt term than absorption.¹⁵ By all accounts, these were spectacularly successful sales.¹⁶ It would have been difficult, at the very least, not to know who Father Jeremias Drexel was, and if he was not being read, he was being heard: the preaching did not stop. Further evidence of the best-selling status of his works is their very rapid republication in editions of larger format, sometimes as re-editions of individual titles but more commonly as selected or collected anthologies. As early as 1628, a 'collected' Drexel appeared in Munich

¹² 'Anna Bergin, widow' was the publisher of the 1622 *Zodiac*.

¹³ 'Cornelius ab Egmond': a pseudonym used by the Amsterdam publisher Willem Blaeu.

¹⁴ See Augustin and Alois de Backer, *Bibliothèque des écrivains de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Tome I., Liège: Grandmont-Donders, 1853, pp. 275–76; Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz, 'Jeremias Drexel', *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, I, Hamm: Bautz Verlag (1975), 1383; and Italo M. Battaferano, 'Drexeliana: Bibliographisches und Rezeptionsgeschichtliches zu Jeremias Drexel', *Studi tedeschi Napoli*, 27 (1984), 255–8. Drexel's enduring popularity owed something to the custom of seventeenth-century publishing houses (such as Blaeu) to hand on tried-and-tested backlists for reprinting from one generation to the next: Paul Begheyn, 'Jesuit Book Production in the Netherlands, 1601–1650', in Thomas M. Lucas, ed., *Spirit, Style, Story: Essays Honoring John W. Padberg, SJ*, Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002, p. 310.

¹⁵ For Munich population statistics in the seventeenth century see the *Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik und Datenverarbeitung* [<http://www.statistik.bayern.de>]. Also G. Richard Dimler, *The Jesuit Emblem: Bibliography of Secondary Literature With Select Commentary and Descriptions*, Brooklyn: AMS Press, 2005, p. xii.

¹⁶ See Jost Schneider, *Sozialgeschichte des Lesens*, Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2004, p. 90.

(*Opera cum indice quadruplici*), and a sizeable two-volume *Opera spiritualia* was published in 1635.¹⁷ Finally, evidence of a considerable trade in pirated editions points from another direction towards an author whose output could be relied upon to generate a keen market for internal consumption and export alike.¹⁸

Drexel's pattern was to allow permission for – and in a number of cases directly commission – a German translation almost as soon as his original text had been completed. As a recent commentator notes, this was a slightly peculiar practice, in that the Latin works were themselves usually the distillation of sermons originally delivered in the vernacular: German orations becoming Latin texts becoming German translations.¹⁹ The author's German translators of choice were his friends Conrad Vetter and Joachim Meichel, although, such was the demand, other translators were called upon at times: Thomas Kern, Christoph Agricola and Andreas Agricola, in particular. The concerted industry demonstrated by this co-dependent policy of publication and translation strongly suggests the production line, and was undertaken with clear fixity of purpose. The spread of European-language translations beyond Germany, completed very swiftly for the most part, is also striking. Entire swathes of Drexel titles were translated into English, French, Italian, Dutch, Hungarian, Polish, Czech and – in one notable case – Welsh.²⁰ This broad sweep of evidence testifies to a sustained, pan-

¹⁷ During the seventeenth century, other recensions of the 'complete' works appeared two more times in Munich; twice in Douai; seven times in Lyons and Mainz; five times in Antwerp; twice in Würzburg and Frankfurt. See Gerhard Dünnhaupt, 'Jeremias Drexel (1581–1638)' in Dünnhaupt, *Personalbibliographien zu den Drucken des Barock*, II, Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1990, pp. 1368–1418.

¹⁸ Paul Begheyn has looked into this question recently in surveying the Netherlandish market for Drexel: 'Several publishers profited from the popularity of Drexel's work and printed his books often without the permission of the author.' See 'The Emblem Books of Jeremias Drexel SJ in the Low Countries. Editions Between 1622 and 1866' in Daly, Dimler and Haub, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

¹⁹ Alan R. Young, 'Drexel's *The Christians Zodiace* (1647) and Protestant Meditation' in Daly, Dimler and Haub, *op. cit.*, pp. 253–4. See also J.M. Blom, 'A German Jesuit and his Anglican Readers. The Case of Jeremias Drexelius (1581–1638)' in G.A.M. Janssens and F.G.A.M. Aarts, eds, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century English Literature, History and Bibliography*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1984, p. 43. Wilhelm Kühlmann notes that in the early-modern German context '[m]uch of the edifying literature of Late Humanism was composed in Latin and then translated into German' and cites Drexel as a prolific example of the process: 'Neo-Latin Literature in Early Modern Germany', in Max Reinhart, ed., *Camden House History of German Literature*, Vol. 4, *Early Modern German Literature 1350–1700*, Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2007, p. 309.

²⁰ Young, p. 254. The Welsh translation of *De aeternitate considerationes* was made by Elis Lewis in 1661, from Ralph Winterton's 1632 English version and titled: *Ystyriaethau Drexelius ar dragywyddoldeb gwedieu cysieithu yn gyntaf yn Saeson-aeg gan Dr R. Winterton*,

European,²¹ trans-denominational, multilevel response to the kind of writing of which Drexel was a seasoned master.²² It also adverts to an appreciation of his resonant way of purveying what had to be said, to his linguistic and oratorical texture, as well as to the appearance and format of the printed works themselves. We are, here, in the presence of a singularly important former of opinion in the field of popular religion, someone to whom the ordinary populace as well as patricians at court could safely look as a mentor.

The *Zodiacus christianus*, in its rudimentary 1618 form (transcribed Lenten sermons) as well as the *editio princeps* of 1622, is characteristic of Drexel's work in its use of engraved emblematic illustrations, here as invariably provided by Raphael Sadeler I.²³ The regular deployment of this technique of meaningful

ae vr awrhon yn Gymraeg gan Elis Lewis o'r Llwyn-gwern yn fir Feirion Wr-bonheddig. Winterton, a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, had undertaken his Latin–English translation as a cure for melancholia. It achieved very considerable success, and became the best known of Drexel's works in England. See Norman Moore (rev. Michael Bevan), 'Ralph Winterton (1601–1636)', in H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, general eds, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 59, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 800.

²¹ Widespread acquaintance with Drexel's works across the entirety of the European continent was being attested as early as the 1620s. On his readership in Poland and proximate Middle European territories, see Marcin Wislocki, 'From Emblem Books to Ecclesiastical Space: Emblems and Quasi-Emblems in Protestant Churches on the Southern Coast of the Baltic Sea and their Devotional Background' in Simon McKeown and Mara R. Wade, eds, *The Emblem in Scandinavia and the Baltic*, Glasgow Emblem Studies, Vol. XI, Glasgow University, 2006, pp. 263–94.

²² By the early eighteenth century Drexel's writings had spread as far as Russia, where they were introduced with some acclaim into Orthodox culture: further evidence of his unique cross-denominational reach, and extraordinary doctrinal polyvalence. Primarily, there is a 1714 translation into Russian, by Metropolitan John of Tobolsk, of the *Heliotropium*. See S.V. Fomin, *Poslednii Tsarskii Sviatoi*, Moscow: Palomnik, 2003. John of Tobolsk was (and is) sometimes erroneously taken to be its author rather than translator.

²³ The 'Raphael Sadeler' mentioned without further qualification in received Drexel scholarship is generally Raphael Sadeler the Elder or 'Raphael Sadeler I' (1560–1629 or 1632). It is significant that at this early stage in Drexel's publishing career – 1618 – the author's name does not appear anywhere on the title page or in the text of the *Zodiac*, while Sadeler's name is prominent on the title page and colophon: after 1618 Drexel is always clearly named as author. See Robin Raybould, *An Introduction to the Symbolic Literature of the Renaissance*, Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2005, p. 272n. The Sadelers were a much-fêted and many-branched family of engravers, originally from Antwerp, migrating serially across Europe, with one stream to Munich, a pattern begun by Raphael's elder brother Johann (Jan). In due course, Raphael's three sons, Raphael (II), Johann (II) and Filips all themselves worked with Drexel. See Young, p. 256. An imperial warranty of protection of Sadeler's engravings for the 1622 *Zodiac* was issued by the Holy Roman Emperor himself, Ferdinand II, and is printed at the end of the volume to prevent plagiarism of the images, on pain of the imperial

illustration was a major part of Drexel's success as an author, and his fertile collaboration with Sadeler a central element in the vertiginous rise of his career in Munich. This cooperation represents an early-modern 'synergy' explaining a number of key elements in the story of Drexel's elevation to popular pre-eminence. He understood that, in the precise context of his writings, illustrations served a number of functions: primarily, as pictorial complements to the text, focal points of devotional meditation and mnemonic aids. As a Bavarian Jesuit, and a figurehead in the liturgical milieu of the seventeenth-century German Baroque, Drexel occupies a major place in the type of culture at once fostered and broadcast by emblematic books. Underscored by the complementary work of Sadeler, his output articulates a particular form of local Catholic worship (and practice) whose ambit then goes on to reach far beyond specific time and place.²⁴ The kind of spiritually charged art which appeared in Drexel's works was prized by the Society of Jesus for its 'visual, mnemonic, and spiritual potentials', yoked as these were to educational theory and a 'profound belief in the benefits of catechisms, litanies, and different types of prayer'.²⁵ In Drexel's case the Sadeler engravings are always 'integral' to the work as a whole,²⁶ and the emblem is always symbolic or metaphoric.²⁷ There is also an inevitable political dimension to bear in mind, as Maximilian I – an archetypal Counter-Reformation prince – clearly found the support of the Bavarian Jesuits an indispensable element in his programme of reforms.²⁸ Members of the Society of Jesus occupied an important

displeasure and a fine of 12 pounds in weight of pure gold. On the peregrinations of this prolific family see Christopher L.C.E. Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance: Prints and the 'Privilegio' in Sixteenth-Century Venice and Rome*, Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp. 194–9.

²⁴ Jeffrey Chipps Smith discusses the Sadeler's contribution as part of a typically Jesuit refraction of professed faith, occupying an important niche in the culture of the time: 'The Art of Salvation in Bavaria', in John W. O'Malley SJ, *et al.*, eds, *The Jesuits. Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000, pp. 568–99. Smith further comments on the inexpensiveness of many of Drexel's emblematic books in the 1630s and 1640s: *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002, p. 7.

²⁵ Smith, 'The Art of Salvation', p. 593.

²⁶ Daly, p. 47.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Maximilian was *de facto* chief-of-staff of the Catholic League, the army mobilized to enact his proprietorial interests during the Thirty Years' War. See Geoffrey Parker, ed., *The Thirty Years' War*, London: Routledge, 1988, *passim*; J.V. Polisensky, *The Thirty Years' War*, London: Batsford, 1974, pp. 137–70; Robert Bireley, *op. cit.*, and the same author's *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450–1700: A Reassessment of the Counter Reformation*, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999, pp. 106–7; Dieter Albrecht, *Die auswärtige Politik Maximilians von Bayern, 1618–1635*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962; Hugo Altmann, *Die Reichspolitik Maximilians I. von*

role at the interstices of religion and politics, and the sanction of divine approval, then as now, could prove remarkably empowering. Bavaria was simultaneously the political bulwark and spiritual epicentre of Catholicism in Germany at this time, and Drexel – as one of the foremost churchmen of the region as well as a trusted ‘spiritual lieutenant’ – was valued highly by Maximilian, not only as formal *Hofprediger* but also personal confessor.²⁹ Moreover with his appointment at Maximilian’s court he found himself at the meeting-point of Catholic culture in the arts, sciences and literature,³⁰ a culture to which he was to contribute most substantively as an embodiment of contemporary versions of courtliness and piety.³¹ It is possible, furthermore, to see the impress of Humanism in the projected ambience of that court.³² Recent scholarship has recognized the particular

Bayern, 1613–1618, Munich: Oldenbourg, 1978. On Maximilian’s campaign to ‘stamp out’ Protestantism in the home territory of Bavaria, see Philip M. Soergel, *Wondrous in His Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, p. 77 and *passim*.

²⁹ On Maximilian’s relations with Drexel during the Thirty Years’ War, and Drexel’s roles as confessor and factotum, see Pörnbacher, pp. 21–4. In these capacities Drexel accompanied Maximilian on his 1620 Austro-Bohemian campaign and kept an (unpublished) diary from the time: see Sigmund Riezler, ‘Kriegstagebücher aus dem ligistischen Hauptquartier 1620’, in *Abhandlungen der Historischen Klasse der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 23 (1903), pp. 77–210. For the influence of Catholic spirituality as purveyed by Drexel and others on Maximilian’s worldview, and Drexel’s reciprocal accommodation of ‘neo-absolutist’ monarchism, see Dieter Albrecht, *Maximilian I. von Bayern, 1573–1651*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998, pp. 285–338; also Wolfgang Behringer, ‘Falken und Tauben. Zur Psychologie deutscher Politiker im 17. Jahrhundert’ in Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia and R.W. Scribner, eds, *Problems in the Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997, p. 227. On the political coloration of Drexel’s advisory role at court, see Robert Bireley, *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990, p. 136. Dieter Breuer discusses the specific role of literature in the ideological complexion of Maximilian’s politics in *Oberdeutsche Literatur 1565–1650: Deutsche Literaturgeschichte und Territorialgeschichte in frühabsolutistischer Zeit*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 1979.

³⁰ See Peter Claus Hartmann, *Die Jesuiten*, 2nd edn, Munich: C.H. Beck, 2008, p. 60.

³¹ See Cristina M. Pumplin, ‘Begriff des Unbegreiflichen’: *Funktion und Bedeutung der Metaphorik in den Geburtsbetrachtungen der Catharina Regina von Greiffenberg (1633–94)*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995, p. 117.

³² On the Humanistic hue of Catholic Bavaria and Drexel’s contribution to it, see Magnus Ulrich Ferber, “Cives vestros sine controversia habeo pro Germaniae cultissimis”: Zum Verhältnis von Späthumanismus und Konfessionalisierung am Beispiel der bikonfessionellen Reichsstadt Augsburg’ in Gernot Michael Müller, ed., *Humanismus und Renaissance in Augsburg: Kulturgeschichte einer Stadt zwischen Spätmittelalter und Dreissigjährigem Krieg*, Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2010, pp. 409–20.

role played here by the Drexel-Sadeler collaboration,³³ and it is precisely those accommodations between political necessity and Bavarian Jesuit spirituality, coming together in that collaboration, which bring Drexel to the fore as a man in the right place at the right time.³⁴ His practice is to 'extend Ignatian devices of meditation beyond confessional boundaries to a larger public,'³⁵ and his work serves therefore as an example of what one might call efficacious introspection. He has been recently identified as a leading figure 'in German symbolic theology and religious emblematics' owing to the 'immensely widespread publication of his books'.³⁶ The ability to break through 'denominational boundaries' may be similarly allied to his public association with emblems.³⁷ It is largely due to his influence that the culture of emblem books itself was able to develop to the extent that it did, this particular mode of symbology soon rising into special aesthetic prominence.³⁸

Central to this significance is the sanctioning by Ignatius of Loyola – the founder of the Society of Jesus – of emblems and images, particularly in regard of

³³ Christine Göttler, 'Rhetorica caelestis: Jacob Bidermann, Jeremias Drexel and the Sadeler at the Court of Maximilian I in Munich', abstract of paper at 'Historians of Netherlandish Art' Conference, Antwerp, March 13–16, 2002 [<http://www.hnanews.org/hna/conferences/antwerp/papers/gottler.html>].

³⁴ It can be persuasively argued that Drexel was as much pioneer as participant in the efflorescence of the Jesuit emblem book in Germany at this time. See Young, p. 254. Nienke Tjoelker also identifies Drexel and his fellow Jesuit Henricus Engelgrave as especially significant in this respect: 'Jesuit Image Rhetoric in Latin and the Vernacular: The Latin and Dutch Emblems of the *Imago Primi Saeculi*' in *Latin and the Vernaculars in Early Modern Europe*. *Renaissanceforum* 6 (2010) p. 97 [<http://www.renaissanceforum.dk>].

³⁵ Göttler, p. 1.

³⁶ Paulette Choné, 'Lorraine and Germany' in Anthony J. Harper and Ingrid Höpel, eds, *The German-Language Emblem in its European Context: Exchange and Transmission*, Glasgow Emblem Studies, Vol. V, Glasgow University, 2000, p. 5.

³⁷ Éva Knapp and Gábor Tuskés, 'German-Hungarian Relations in Literary Emblematics', in Harper and Höpel, p. 44. The same cross-denominational appeal of Drexel's emblematic works in the Dutch context, beginning with the *Zodiac*, is referenced by Bert Both and Els Stronks: 'Acceptatie van het vreemde. Pers- en geloofsvrijheid in de Republiek vanuit internationaal perspectief', *Nederlandse Letterkunde*, Jaargang 15, 2 (augustus 2010), 77.

³⁸ See John Landwehr, *German Emblem Books, 1531–1888. A Bibliography*, Utrecht: Haentjens Dekker & Gumbert, 1972; and Mario Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery*, 2nd edn, Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1964, pp. 318–320. The 'most influential expression' of Jesuit emblem-culture at this period was the *Imago Primi Saeculi Societatis Iesu*, published in 1640 in Antwerp on the first centenary of the Jesuit order, a richly illustrated history of the Society to that point. Tjoelker, p. 98. See also Lydia Salviucci Insolera, *L'Imago Primi Saeculi (1640) e il significato dell'immagine allegorica nella Compagnia di Gesù: Genesi e fortuna del libro*, Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2004.

education.³⁹ It derives in part from the longstanding medieval and Renaissance tradition of memory-cultivation (the *ars memorativa*), but is here lent special focus by the Jesuit 'recognition of the primacy of the visual image as an aid to religious meditation [in which] the starting point for private meditation, in keeping with Ignatius's famous *composition of place* (*compositio loci*), might well be [...] an emblem.'⁴⁰ The relationship between private devotion and imagery is material here, and as Craig Harbison points out, an emphasis on private devotions 'did not have to weaken Church authority: there is no evidence that clerics complained about lay people saying their prayers privately'.⁴¹ In fact, in the Ignatian system of spiritual figuring – *invisibilia per visibilia* – the association of the meditative with the pictorial could not be more intimate.⁴² The spiritual is not only rendered present, it is rendered enduringly present. Drexel's practice exemplifies both the devotional dimension of memory-cultivation and also its particular Jesuit inflection. He was keenly interested by the uses of imagery

³⁹ Writing of St Francis de Sales and the relationship he exemplifies between emblematic and *eloquentia*, Joseph E. Chorpennig makes the wider observation that the 'primacy of emblems in Jesuit education is clear as early as the 1560s, when Father Ledesma, head of studies in the Collegio Romano, suggested that once a year, on a feast day, the best compositions of the pupils – orations, letters, visual poems, and emblems – be exhibited [...] Student emblem exhibitions (*affixiones*) quickly became a standard feature of Jesuit colleges'. See 'St Francis de Sales's "Emblematic Habit of Mind"', *International Commission for Salesian Studies Newsletter*, 19 (January–February 2007), p. 3.

⁴⁰ Young, p. 259. For a useful re-examination of the 'art of memory' see Mary Carruthers and Jan M. Ziolkowski, eds, *The Medieval Craft of Memory. An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, pp. 1–31. This volume is a conspectus of writers who would have been well known to Drexel. The devotional element is of vital importance: see Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966, p. 113: '[T]he art of memory came out of the Middle Ages. Its profoundest roots were in a most venerable past. From those deep and mysterious origins it flowed on into later centuries, bearing the stamp of religious fervour strangely combined with mnemotechnical detail which was set upon it in the Middle Ages'. Stephen Clucas refers to the persistence into the early European Enlightenment of 'memorial culture': 'Introduction' to Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory. The Quest for a Universal Language*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000, p. x. For further examples of secular and religious examples lasting usefully beyond the medieval period see Wolfgang Neuber and Jörg Jochen Berns, eds, *Ars Memorativa: Zur kulturgeschichtlichen Bedeutung der Gedächtniskunst 1400–1750*, Tübingen: Niemayer, 1993.

⁴¹ Craig Harbison, *The Art of the Northern Renaissance*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995, p. 94.

⁴² '[T]he importance of the Ignatian method lies in its unremitting emphasis on making every possible focus of meditation – even invisible things and abstract notions – palpably pictorial'. David Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 180.

in 'fixing' meanings, and spent much of his scholarly career refining the old legacy of the 'memory book' for contemporary readers. As a rhetorician, his primary concern was the adaptation of the *ars memorativa* to the acquired skills of excerpting and 'commonplacing', and his *Aurifodina artium et scientiarum omnium* (Munich, 1638) established itself as a singularly important treatise in this regard.⁴³ It can also be taken as something of a manifesto for the programme of referencing and judicious allusion, to classical and Biblical sources alike, which characterizes Drexel's devotional work generally and the *Zodiacus christianus* specifically. His note 'To The Reader' at the beginning of that work explicitly states, indeed, that he has chosen his materials with an eye to assisting recollection. Furthermore, his abiding concern with the usages of emblematic *aide-mémoires* suggests a pattern of meditation and devotion which can be closely allied to Jesuit practice, in which 'efficacious introspection' is taken to a deeper level of meaning. Following St Augustine, 'a rhetoric of prayer as an internal dialogue with God' has the effect of distinguishing 'celestial eloquence' (the intimate language of the heart) from the arsenal of received rhetorical devices inherited from Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian.⁴⁴ All his works make clear that

⁴³ The *Aurifodina* has been described by Noel Malcolm as 'one of the most influential seventeenth-century guides to commonplacing'. For Malcolm's situation of Drexel in the broader context, see his 'Thomas Harrison and His "Ark of Studies": An Episode in the History of the Organisation of Knowledge', in *The Seventeenth Century*, 19 (2004), pp. 196–232. Drexel's practice is intimately linked to his understanding of perspicacity and good judgment (*iudicium*) following the example of Justus Lipsius: see Elisabeth Décultot, *Lire, copier, écrire: Les bibliothèques manuscrites et leurs usages au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: CNRS Editions, 2003, p. 56. Also Florian Neumann, 'Jeremias Drexels *Aurifodina* und die *Ars Excerptendi* bei den Jesuiten' in Helmut Zedelmaier and Martin Mulsow, eds, *Die Praktiken der Gelehrsamkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Tübingen: Niemayer, 2001, pp. 51–62; Helmut Zedelmaier, 'Buch und Wissen in der Frühen Neuzeit (15. – 18. Jahrhundert)' in Ursula Rautenberg, ed., *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland: Ein Handbuch*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010, pp. 524–25; Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1996, pp. 232–37. The *Aurifodina* is one of the two 'most reprinted' books on note-taking in the era: Ann Blair, 'Student Manuscripts and the Textbook' in Emidio Campi, ed., *Scholarly Knowledge: Textbooks in Early Modern Europe*, Geneva: Droz, 2008, p. 64. On account of this work Drexel is, for Anthony Grafton, a 'great theorist of note taking': *Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009, p. 134. Indeed, as Ann Blair and Peter Stallybrass suppose, Drexel's eminence as a mnemotechnician – unlike his reputation as a Baroque preacher – establishes some claim for him as not only a late-Renaissance, but early-Enlightenment figure of importance: 'Mediating Information, 1450–1800' in Clifford Siskin and William Warner, eds, *This Is Enlightenment*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010, pp. 139–63.

⁴⁴ Göttler, p. 2. See also Hanspeter Marti, 'Der Dialog mit Gott im Gebet: die *Rhetorica caelestis* des Jesuiten Jeremias Drexel' in Dieter Breuer, ed., *Religion und Religiosität im*

he was very familiar with these masters too, through reference and citation, and he uses their devices himself to great effect: they are enthusiastically embraced.⁴⁵

The rhetorical procedure adopted by Drexel as practitioner is wide-ranging and comprehensive. It takes the form of direct addresses to his readers, appeals, *exempla*, apostrophes, admonishments and exhortations, complemented by an informed and persuasive purchase on analogy, simile and metaphor. The confluence of 'celestial' with canonical classical rhetoric was completely in conformity with the preacherly practices of the Catholic Baroque in Germany, but Drexel was celebrated as a unique adept.⁴⁶ The cases which we shall see exemplified in the *Zodiacus christianus* are all mnemonic fixatives, invitations to consider shared experience and attempts at making theological or spiritual concepts 'real' and available, no matter what the reader's cultural hinterland or mental equipment may have been. As a 'popular' preacher and writer in both senses of the word, Drexel identified this as his primary contribution – far more than the wrangling of doctrinal niceties. In his works, literal and metaphoric illustrations both serve the same end, and so this studied use of language is of quite fundamental significance. Writing in emphatic terms of the general relationship between metaphor and the concept of sin, for instance, one commentator has to say that 'apart from attention to the concrete particularity of human language there is no access to the categories of sin and forgiveness'.⁴⁷ The promotion of 'celestial eloquence', however, takes Drexel and his hearers and readers into places inaccessible to all non-Christian rhetoricians.⁴⁸ He uses this technique, just as he uses emblems, to effect transcendence. It is telling that the commentators, 'Doctors' and exegetes whom he especially favours as authorities in the *Zodiacus* are those who appear to be employing rhetoric to the same transcendent ends – most notably St Ambrose and (aptly) St John Chrysostom, quoted everywhere in the text. Readers of Drexel who wish to see

Zeitalter des Barock, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995, pp. 509–21. On the place of the *sermo humilis* in Drexel's rhetoric see Karlheinz Töchterle, 'Jesuitischer Redeschwall: Zu Balde, *Lyr.* 3,8' in Eckard Lefevre, ed., *Balde und Horaz*, Tübingen: Narr, 2002, p. 192.

⁴⁵ 'The cultivation by the Jesuits of classical rhetoric [...] was not simply conforming to the received wisdom of the day but a pursuit that correlated with their deepest pastoral impulses.' John W. O'Malley SJ, *The First Jesuits*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 371.

⁴⁶ See Urs Herzog, *Geistliche Wohlredenheit: Die katholische Barockpredigt*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 1991, *passim*.

⁴⁷ Gary A. Anderson, *Sin. A History*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009, p. 6.

⁴⁸ On the Jesuit concept of the 'rhetoric of prayer' as analogous, in Drexel's understanding, to a personal spiritual dialogue with Christ or the Mother of God, see Barbara Bauer, *Jesuitische Ars Rhetorica im Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1986, p. 201.

in him an exemplar of late-Renaissance rhetorical practice may safely conclude that through this subtle negotiation between Christian and non-Christian allusion he is revealed as not content merely to imitate: he must seek out specific pertinence to his time and place. The placing of emblems is central, in his mind, to this requirement.

To that extent, the offbeat titles of Drexel's works were never intended merely to be eye-catching.⁴⁹ Their first function is indubitably to pique readers' curiosity, as any name-check of just some of the principal writings would demonstrate: *Horologium auxiliaris tutelaris angeli* ('The Guardian Angel's Clock', 1622); *Trismegistus christianus* ('The Christian Trismegistus', 1624); *Aeternitatis prodromus* ('The Herald of Eternity', 1628); *Gymnasium patientiae* ('The Grammar School of Patience', 1630); *Gazophylacium Christi* ('The Thesaurus of Christ', 1637); *Aurifodina artium et scientiarum omnium* ('The Goldmine of All the Arts and Sciences', 1638) and so on. Once his readers have been reeled in, however, Drexel must hold their attention in order for his full programme of spiritual awakening, preferably followed by unsleeping vigilance, to take effect. His titles are of a piece with his placing of meaningful emblems and pointed rhetoric. Together these build into a coherent symbolic and representational system.⁵⁰ All of Drexel's narrative, structural and emblematic approaches are holistic, and completely implicated with each other.⁵¹ The intention in so arranging the material is to presuppose a profoundly harmonious affinity between divine will and the human fear of chaos and cosmic disorder, expressed in a yearning for meaningful patterns. Recognition of 'conformity' between the two expressions of will – one divine, one human – is a preferred Drexel device, in the 1627 *Heliotropium* as a central theme, and in the *Zodiacus* and elsewhere as a variation on a theme.⁵² These interdependent stratagems of recognition

⁴⁹ A number of commentators single out for attention the colourful or frankly bizarre titles Drexel gave his works. See for instance Latham, p. 85, or the page on Drexel in the online *Catholic Encyclopedia*: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05156a.htm>.

⁵⁰ Csilla Gábor, 'Spiritualität, Literatur, Theologie. Versuch einer interdisziplinären Annäherung', *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Theologia Catholica Latina*, LII, 1 (2007), 32.

⁵¹ With reference to the 1629 *Orbis Phaëthon*, Jean Michel Massing remarks on the 'homogénéité totale' between Drexel's words and Sadeler's engravings: it applies to all the works on which they collaborated. *Du Texte à l'image: la Calomnie d'Apelle et son iconographie*, Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 1990, p. 61.

⁵² The *Heliotropium* was, among Drexel's works, a particularly favoured reprint in English. See Peter M. Daly and G. Richard Dimler, *The Jesuit Series*, Parts 1–5, Corpus Librorum Emblematicum. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, and Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997–2007, J.335–49. The five parts of *The Jesuit Series* constitute an illustrated bibliography of Jesuit emblems that accords Drexel his due place as, among other things, an object of modern scholarship.

and acknowledgement take readers beyond the familiar zone of conventional response into a deeper meditative space, where what once was complacently assumed is transformed into something more literally other-worldly. In work after work the customary impedimenta of the *hic et nunc* are shown really to be departure-points into a richer, spiritually electric cosmos in which nothing less than the reader's eternal destiny is at stake. As Drexel says in his Dedication: 'Any error in this journey [of life] is made eternal.' These heady considerations are handled with aplomb and a degree of relish. Rhetorical tropes – dramatic to the point of being theatrical – are wrought so that his message is carried straight into the centre of each reader's experience.⁵³ His provocations assert that one's life is not bound by the mundane, but is forever numinously fascinating; and this means all lives, all people, universally. The emblematic scheme dovetails beautifully with this intention. Writing of the particular qualities intrinsic to religious art, John Drury argues that spiritual representations 'are not the redundant reduplication of reality, giving us facsimiles which are exactly like what is there already. They are powerful because they infuse and metamorphose the visible with the invisible.'⁵⁴ They may, indeed, constitute an interface between

⁵³ On the 'theatrical' Drexel see Karl Pörnbacher, "Unser Leben ist ein Comedi." Elemente des Theaters im Werk von Jeremias Drexel" in Guillaume Van Gemert and Manfred Knedlik, eds, *Museion Boicum oder bajuwarische Musengabe: Beiträge zur bayerischen Kultur und Geschichte*, Amsterdam: APA-Holland University Press, 2009, pp. 56–71. Drexel's first published work was almost certainly a five-act tragedy about Julian the Apostate, written and performed in Munich in 1608: *Summa der tragödien von Keyser Iuliano abtrinnigen*. Michael A. Mullett rightly remarks that it draws on Roman rather than scriptural history, and presents Julian as a complex, virtuous figure: *The Catholic Reformation*, London: Routledge, 1999, p. 206. Ruprecht Wimmer notes the influence of Italian Renaissance conventions on the Jesuit drama of the time, including Drexel's: *Jesuitentheater: Didaktik und Fest*, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1982, p. 320. Jean-Marie Valentin points out the close didactic association in Drexel's tragedy between the natural 'order of things' and the proper governance of the state: *Les Jésuites et le théâtre (1554–1680): Contribution à l'histoire culturelle du monde catholique dans le Saint-Empire romain germanique*, Paris: Desjonquères, 2001, p. 407. On the Jesuit belief that theatre can simultaneously reinforce social order and enhance spirituality, and Drexel's role in this, see Andrew L. Thomas, *A House Divided: Wittelsbach Court Cultures in the Holy Roman Empire, c.1550–1650*, Leiden: Brill, 2010, p. 92. On Drexel's pre-publication activities as contributor to, and participant in, Jesuit performances see Pierre Béhar and Helen Watanabe O'Kelly, eds, *Spectaculum Europaeum: Theatre and Spectacle in Europe (1580–1750). Histoire du Spectacle en Europe*, Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 1999, p. 16.

⁵⁴ John Drury, *Painting the Word. Christian Pictures and their Meanings*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002, p. 42. On the theory of 'pictorial exegesis' and its survival into the early modern era see Anna C. Esmeijer, *Divina Quaternitas. A Preliminary Study in the Method and Application of Visual Exegesis*, Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, Assen, 1978.

the palpable and the sacred.⁵⁵ In Drexel, such a challenge to the pedestrian, if not downright oppressive, grind of daily living must clearly have held vast appeal.⁵⁶ The capacity to presuppose a degree of cosmic excitement in this way accounts for much of the strength and tenacity of his popularity across national and denominational boundaries. He was able to make it devastatingly clear to his readers time and again that it was their own lives, and afterlives, that he had in his sights. These high stakes become a vital ingredient in the book which they are reading, the lesson which they are hearing and his stories are always their stories. Drexel makes himself into a populist *vade-mecum*, urging readers to 'own' their spiritual responsibilities, particularly through regular recourse to confession.⁵⁷ His recommendation of the practice of fasting is another way by which ordinary readers can assume some measurable responsibility for their own extramundane lives.⁵⁸ The books are intended to become part of a necessary and continuous process of spiritual self-scrutiny.⁵⁹ Drexel is, in a dramatic sense and in his role

⁵⁵ E.H. Gombrich refers to the Renaissance 'assumption that the higher orders reveal themselves to our limited mind through the sign language of nature. It is not we who select and use symbols for communication, it is the Divine which expresses itself in the hieroglyph of sensible things'. *Symbolic Images. Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, London: Phaidon, 1972, p. 178.

⁵⁶ On the local conditions of the era and the role of the church in softening their roughest edges, particularly in Catholic cities, see Brian S. Pullan, 'Catholics, Protestants, and the Poor in Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 35, 3 (Winter 2005), 441–56.

⁵⁷ On the specific role of confession as commended by Drexel and his contemporaries see Lance Lazar, 'The Formation of the Pious Soul: Transalpine Demand for Jesuit Devotional Texts, 1548–1615' in John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand and Anthony J. Papalas, eds, *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1700. Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, pp. 289–318. On the conventions of Catholic confessional culture in Germany at this time see also W. David Myers, *Poor, Sinning Folk: Confession and Conscience in Counter-Reformation Germany*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996; and C. Scott Dixon, *The Reformation in Germany*, Historical Association Studies, Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, p. 149.

⁵⁸ Fasting is a much-revisited theme in Drexel, and in one work a predominant one: *Aloe amari, sed salubris succi Ieiunium* ('Bitter Aloes, or Healthy Essences for Fasting', 1637). Ken Albala argues that this work makes not only a moral, but a rational and even gastronomic case for fasting: see 'The Ideology of Fasting in the Reformation Era' in Ken Albala and Trudy Eden, eds, *Food and Faith in Christian Culture*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2011, pp. 41–58.

⁵⁹ On the role of vivid imagery as used by Drexel and others to prompt examinations of conscience see W. David Myers, 'From Confession to Reconciliation and Back: Sacramental Penance' in Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella, eds, *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 241–66. On the several functions of devotional imagery in Jesuit writing of the time see Ralph

as *pastor*, coming to his readers' rescue, and they were grateful in huge numbers. He does not mince words, or waste time. There is no time for the abstract, or the casual.⁶⁰ The persuasive simplicity of the message is always in the centre-ground.⁶¹ The eschatology is visceral rather than conceptual. It is imagistic, immediate and theologically uncomplicated. Indeed in general terms Drexel stayed away from polemic and the fault-lines of theological controversy.⁶² There are no signs of him attempting to stamp his name on the age in any political or ideological sense, nor did he seek the celebrity which accrued as his reputation spread. His vocation was purely spiritual, and his powerful commitment to it was the whole of his motivation in public life.⁶³ In his own terms he was on this earth simply to do his duty, first by God and the Society of Jesus, then by Maximilian.⁶⁴ But there could be nothing more important, nothing more needful for his readers to know than the trajectory of their last end, and the natural corollary was that 'questions of eternity tend[ed] to resolve themselves into reflections on heaven and hell'.⁶⁵

Dekoninck, *Ad Imaginem: Statuts, fonctions et usages de l'image dans la littérature spirituelle jésuite du XVIIe siècle*, Geneva: Droz, 2005.

⁶⁰ Not a moment is to be wasted: see Pavel Král, 'Tod, Begräbnisse und Gräber: Funeralrituale des böhmischen Adels als Mittel der Repräsentation und des Andenkens' in Mark Hengerer, ed., *Macht und Memoria: Begräbniskultur europäischer Oberschichten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Cologne: Böhlau, 2005, p. 426.

⁶¹ On the importance to Drexel of linguistic directness see Karl-Heinz Göttert, *Geschichte der Stimme*, Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1998, p. 278.

⁶² It will, of course, always be possible to claim that this form of detachment is itself a theological position, more or less controversial depending on the context of the age. Herbert Jaumann begins his brief summary of Drexel's life by calling him: 'Kontroversist, Prediger, Schriftsteller'. See *Handbuch Gelehrtenkultur der Frühen Neuzeit*, I, *Bio-bibliographisches Repertorium*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004, pp. 231–2. Nonetheless, such bones of contention are not a conspicuous part of Drexel's writings.

⁶³ Pörnbacher, *Jeremias Drexel*, p. 43–4.

⁶⁴ On Drexel's 'Christian-Stoic ethics of duty' see Volker Meid, *Die deutsche Literatur im Zeitalter des Barock. Vom Späthumanismus zur Frühaufklärung*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 2009, p. 349. It has been argued that the stoic dimension in Drexel's work (or at any rate the 'neo-stoic' concept of *constantia*) was a significant and distinct factor in his appeal to Protestants: Zsombor Tóth, 'From the Cradle to the Grave: Representations of Confessional Identity in Mihály Cserei's Writings (1667–1747). A Case Study in Historical Anthropology', *Colloquia*, XV (2008), 55

⁶⁵ Daly, p. 54. See also René Pillorget, *Le Ciel et l'enfer dans l'oeuvre de Jérémie Drexel, Jésuite bavarois, 1581–1638*, Angers: Presses Universitaires d'Angers, 1989, pp. 87–93. The focus here is on *De aeternitate considerationes*, and Drexel's treatment particularly of hell. On the infinity of eternity in Drexel, see Benito Pelegrin, *Figurations de l'infini. L'âge baroque européen*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2000, p. 56.

Drexel's rhetorical churchmanship, in which the looming presence of an afterlife is implied everywhere in the routine patterns of this life, demanded that his message should be as severely direct as the lexis would allow. Quite simply, the realities with which he confronts his readers were non-negotiable. For all the sophistication of his rhetorical palette, the subtle filtration of scholarship and the frequently exotic coloration of his metaphors, Drexel's refrain is austere – black and white: the saved are bound for heaven, the damned for hell. The nuanced circumstances by which this latter fate can be avoided, and heaven gained, never mitigate that central burden. At every step, the road forks, and the true way must be recognized and chosen. No compromise can therefore be offered, no rationalization or psychologization of complex human situations. There is none of the special pleading soon to be associated with an impending 'God of Reason.' All must be infallibly traced to the stark facts. The yawning void is ever before unswerving Drexel's gaze, the flames perpetually flickering in the corner of his eye.⁶⁶ So too with his readers. The forbidding presence of Judgment may be dreadful to contemplate, but in Drexel's hands it is galvanizing in its effects.⁶⁷ There can hardly be any doubt that it held a grim fascination: one was drawn back for more. It also jibed perfectly with the theological timbre of his time and place. Drexel had discovered an accommodating cultural context in which to belabour his readers invigoratingly with the truth of hell – in particular – as an objective reality. No less real and present, as he regularly recalled, were the wiles of the 'Evil One' and his implacable commitment to our ruination.⁶⁸ These notions, as Drexel articulated them, found a consistently ready audience throughout the seventeenth century. The cool scrutiny of the dawning European Enlightenment, by contrast, could scarcely be expected to continue stoking the minatory fires.⁶⁹ The tendency to complexification in the Enlightenment

⁶⁶ On Drexel's 'direct gaze' see Heribert Gauly, *Das einfache Auge: die Lehre des Paters Jeremias Drexel SJ. über die 'Recta intentio'*, Mainz: Matthias Grünewald, 1962.

⁶⁷ 'It is said that his voice was strong enough to be heard in every corner of the church and that his sermons were such that an hour would seem like a few minutes'. *Jesuit Portraits*, Chapter 4 (Cot-Go), at <http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu/jmac/jp/jpcotgo.htm>.

⁶⁸ Drexel believed in the ever-present menace of diabolical collusion, and was not above encouraging witch-hunts when such maleficence could be demonstrated. See Wolfgang Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern: Volksmagie, Glaubenseifer und Staatsräson in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997, pp. 234–5; also Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 560.

⁶⁹ 'The new light was to get rid of "slavery and superstition" and dispel the "shadows" [...] If we look back on the period preceding the eighteenth century, it seems as if this light had in fact been lacking in previous ages. The history of the human race now seemed to be a gradual progression from primitive beginnings to an existence that grew ever more complex:

– its insistence on drawing hitherto immaculate truths into various arenas of debate, the mission for explication rather than experience of non-rational episodes, the governing imperative of universal ratiocination above all – makes Drexel's immensities look quaint. His oratorical diapason does sound theatrical at the time when he is giving vent, but it is never in his own mind merely so: all is purposive. But when this kind of writing is not taken seriously, when it is posthumously relegated to drama or sensationalism, it cannot survive. Drexel managed with astonishing success not to become an anachronism for many decades. His canon survived *into* the eighteenth century, but as a major yardstick of popular spirituality it could hardly survive much beyond it.⁷⁰ He lingered for a time on the peripheries of the literature of piety, and can still be found there now, if one looks hard enough. There were attempts at reviving interest in his work during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for instance, which ushered him briefly and unmemorably back into the public eye,⁷¹ and the recent advent of print-on-demand publishing has meant that long-outmoded facsimile translations of some of the works are now available from online retailers. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the star had long since ceased being in the ascendant. Drexel's absolute congruity with his age was in time the cause of obliteration by posterity.

it was no longer seen as a predetermined path leading to the Apocalypse and the Last Judgement. Around the middle of the [eighteenth] century Voltaire, Ferguson and Iselin attempted to sketch a historical view of human progress. They stand at the beginning of a long series of similar undertakings with the same purpose which extends via Wieland, Home, Herder, Lessing, Mably and Kant to Condorcet'. Ulrich Im Hof, *The Enlightenment*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995, p. 7. Such generic formulations still fundamentally hold, revisionism notwithstanding: the Drexel version of articulated spirituality will be side-lined as a matter of course under such dispensations.

⁷⁰ Drexel's works continued to be read and known by churchmen well beyond the eighteenth century, and formed part of ecclesiastical libraries far and wide: 'A case in point is The Bishop's Library of St Mary the Virgin in Glasgow. Originally compiled by Dr John Jebb (1775–1833) [...] it contained 36 volumes of Drexel [...] A scholarly and religious man, Jebb is regarded as a *spiritus rector* of the Oxford Movement'. Daly, p. 66. On Drexel's 'resilient' popularity in English translation throughout the eighteenth century, see Alison Shell, 'Spiritual and Devotional Prose' in Gordon Braden, Robert Cummings and Stuart Gillespie, eds, *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English*, Vol. 2, 1550–1660, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 426. Perhaps the most high-profile case of Drexel's presence in English literary culture occurs when Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* admits to reading *De aeternitatis considerationes* as part of her programme of 'improving reading' in Volume II of *Clarissa Harlowe; Or, the History of a Young Lady* (1748). However, the phenomenally popular seventeenth-century profile of Drexel was by then a thing of the past.

⁷¹ See J.M. Blom, 'What Do Translations Transmit? Jeremias Drexelius in the Hands of his English Translators', *Lias*, 16, 1 (1989), 1.

In his heyday Drexel made the most vivid marks on the canvas of his era, in those decades preceding the deliberative programmes of the Enlightenment. On all the evidence, his vast readership, by turns terrified and reassured, was seized with the importance of these reflections – the ‘considerations upon eternity’ with which he had launched his career – just as they were meant to be. Each individual was recalled to a sense of his own place in a massive cosmic order, in a world constantly transmitting meanings and delivering information. Drexel appeared to have decoded the grammar by which this imperative news was conveyed. Readers lured to the *Zodiacus christianus* by the promising self-contradiction in its title were immediately prompted to reflect that they had no need to seek an astrally ordered origin to their experience of life’s horrors and joys: the divinely ordained cosmos was already aglow with immanent purpose, had they only the eyes to see it. The premises of vatic divination are co-opted only to be doubled back into the Truth which, Drexel asserts, was there all along. The transcending amalgamation of image and word in the *Zodiacus* constitutes Drexel’s parsing of a divine language. His symbols, from the burning candle of Sign I to the strung lute of Sign XII, are shortcuts to assist readers along their own path towards the reality addressed by that language, as an expression of harmonious divine order.⁷² As the author puts it in the ‘Dedication’: ‘It is that pathway to blessed eternity which I mean to indicate with this volume [...] Thorny is the path to the stars, whose end-point is brightly pointed up by these twelve signs.’⁷³ The ‘signs’ are meaningful, but in the universe thus figured by Drexel everything unmentioned is meaningful too. His way with preaching and writing summoned an intense, inclusive spirituality which spoke to the deepest fears and hopes of his Christian listeners and readers, irrespective of doctrinal or liturgical allegiances. He had found a way to go deeper. It is the linguistic organization of spiritual intensity which set him aside in this sense, and commended his example to writers striving for similar heights.⁷⁴ His extraordinary and well-documented success in achieving this feat, during a period which like so many others was characterized by religious strife and the political exploitation of religious difference, is itself reason enough to begin taking a renewed interest in the phenomenon of Jeremias Drexel.

⁷² Drexel’s counterpoise of words and images in presupposing this harmony is complemented by his deep love of music. See Pörnbacher, *Jeremias Drexel*, p. 37–8.

⁷³ *Zodiacus christianus*, ‘Dedication’.

⁷⁴ Christopher Dawson notes that the prose works of the Welsh metaphysical poet Henry Vaughan (1622–95) are ‘for the most part translations from Jesuit authors like Drexelius and Nieremberg’. *The Dividing of Christendom*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1971; reprinted, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009, p. 155.

There are some signs that this is now taking place. As the footnotes to this Introduction show, a sizeable body of articles referring to Drexel and in some cases devoted to aspects of his life and work, along with acknowledgements of him in larger studies, has appeared since 2000. They have tended to focus on his significance as an emblemist or theorist of memory cultivation, or on the extraordinary record of publications and translations in his name, but there is also evidence of a resurgence of interest in Drexel as author, in his verbal stagecraft, and the nature of his particular method of communication with readers. The spellbinding effect he had on them, and the successful transfer of his technique of hellfire preaching from pulpit to page, has recently been noticed – for instance – by John Casey, who considers not only his capacity to conjure a vivid cosmos populated with angels and demons, but also the concomitant spread of popularity across the European continent. In a section of his ‘guide to heaven, hell, and purgatory’ entitled ‘Jesuit Hells’, Casey notes, for example, the influence on Tobias Swinden’s 1714 *Enquiry into the Nature and Place of Hell* of Drexel’s notorious calculation (in *De aeternitate considerationes*) that the numbers of the damned in hell are no fewer than one hundred thousand million, squashed into one German square mile.⁷⁵ This new light cast on three principal Drexel texts – *The Considerations of Drexelius Upon Eternity* (translated by S. Dunster, London, 1710), *The Hive of Devotion* (‘Translated by a Fellow of Trinity College’, London, 1647) and *Infernus Damnatorum Carcer et Rogus, Aeternitatis* (Cologne, 1632) – is most notable in its revelation of Drexel in mainstream culture rather than the margins, on the correct assumption that this is where he belongs in any discussion of early modern popular religion. Alluding to the ‘fierce’ Jesuit’s rhetorical technique, Casey sees Drexel as an exemplar of a particular Counter-Reformation psychology:

On the whole, Catholic attempts to imagine hell remain exercises in psychological rhetoric, mixed with theological argument. They aim to have the same dramatic immediacy that characterizes baroque art of the period. Counter-Reformation Catholicism developed an immensely effective dramatic psychology of the Last Things, death, judgment, hell, and heaven.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ John Casey, *After Lives. A Guide to Heaven, Hell and Purgatory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 212–13. Swinden was sceptical about Drexel’s arithmetic. See also Peter Marshall, ‘The Reformation of Hell? Protestant and Catholic Infernalisms in England, c.1560–1640’, *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61 (2010), 279–98; and Jörg Jochen Berns, ‘Höllenmeditation. Zur meditativen Funktion und mnemotechnischen Struktur barocker Höllendichtung’, in Gerhard Kurz, ed., *Meditation und Erinnerung in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000, p. 144.

⁷⁶ Casey, p. 194.

The dramatic psychology to which Casey refers is not confined to threats and warnings: the mention of heaven is quite as apposite. Heaven is always rhetorically present, and its reality every bit as integral to the Drexel presentation of afterlives. David Lederer sees this dimension as 'spiritual physic', a soothing balm to the troubled soul, with Drexel one of its most emollient practitioners – almost a proto-psychiatrist – in the 'beacon' of *Bavaria Sancta*.⁷⁷ There was also comfort to be derived from the knowledge that guardian angels were toiling ceaselessly on behalf of wretched humanity, even in the case of the damned. Drexel enumerates the qualities possessed by these benign beings in *Horologium auxiliaris tutelarum angelorum* ('The Guardian Angel's Clock', 1622), together with the dues owed them, and Trevor Johnson alludes to the role played by Drexel in spreading word of their particular ministry.⁷⁸ Drexel is becoming a focus of attention once more,⁷⁹ and his acknowledgement by anglophone scholarship is timely and fitting.

⁷⁷ David Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe. A Bavarian Beacon*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 49–98. On the priest as 'physician of souls' (citing Drexel) see also Charles H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008, p. 126; see also Günter Butzer, 'Psychagogik in der Frühen Neuzeit' in Herbert Jaumann, ed., *Diskurse der Gelehrtenkultur in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010, pp. 715–46. An analogy concerning the right method of nursing morbid souls may be made with the writings of the Belgian Jesuit (of Irish descent) William Stanyhurst (1602–63), whose work *Dei immortalis in corpore mortali patientis historia* (Antwerp, 1660) was, like Drexel's *Zodiac*, much translated across Europe. See Daly and Dimler, J.1360–1396.

⁷⁸ Trevor Johnson, 'Guardian Angels and the Society of Jesus' in Alexandra Walsham and Peter Marshall, eds, *Angels in the Early Modern World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 191–213.

⁷⁹ In German literary scholarship Drexel's importance is already being re-affirmed. He is, for instance, now seen as one of the 'three most significant' writers of the Maximilian era (the other two being the dramatist Jakob Bidermann and the lyric poet Jakob Balde, who succeeded Drexel at court and composed a eulogistic ode on his predecessor). See Werner Besch, et al., eds, *Sprachgeschichte: Ein Handbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Ihrer Erforschung*, III, Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 2004, p. 2497. On Drexel's importance as the only one of the trio writing primarily in prose, see Volker Meid, *op. cit.*, pp. 773–6; on his influence as a German-language stylist in the pulpit (rather than Latinist in print), see Dieter Breuer, 'Der Streit über die Frage, "wo das beste Teutsch zu finden"' in Jürgen Macha, Anna-Maria Balbach and Sarah Horstkamp, eds, *Konfession und Sprache in der Frühen Neuzeit: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven*, Münster: Waxmann, 2012, p. 36.

II

The *Zodiacus christianus* perfectly embodies the strategies by which he sought to establish the most necessary of relationships between himself and his readers. It can be seen as a quintessential Drexel production in form and content, manner and matter, ethos and pathos. As an index of his popularity, also, it is a perfect case-study. In the year after the first appearance of the book, a German translation was published in Munich (as *Zodiacus christianus, das ist Christlicher Himmelcirckel*), with a second German edition five years after that.⁸⁰ Alan R. Young calculates that during the seventeenth century there were in total 11 Munich editions, and seven in Cologne, with others in Würzburg, Frankfurt, Rotterdam, Vienna, Cracow, Douai, Rouen, Rome, Prague and London.⁸¹ The Rouen version (1633) was the first translation into English – a recusant edition – and this was followed by four Protestant English editions printed in London, two editions in 1647 and the remaining two in 1658 and 1676.⁸² Young makes the very necessary point, in discussing Drexel's fate at the hands of his English translators, that the intrinsic broadness of his appeal made it relatively easy to 'protestantize' him in translation, and provides a detailed account of the various chapters of this posthumous story.⁸³ It may well be read as an instructive tale of doctrinal plasticity.⁸⁴ As far as the original Latin *Zodiacus* was concerned, the signature elements were put fully in place between the slight homiletic sketch of 1618 and the fully-fledged 'authoritative' edition of 1622, by which point the author's narrative assurance had come into its own.⁸⁵ Drexel was in his own mind certain that the 1622 edition should from that moment be taken as standard, and in his prefatory notice 'To The Reader' even implores readers to 'discard'

⁸⁰ The translators were Conrad Vetter SJ and Thomas Kern SJ respectively. Drexel enjoyed a close working relationship with both.

⁸¹ Young, p. 256.

⁸² Ibid., p. 257.

⁸³ Ibid., passim.

⁸⁴ 'The majority of translations [of Drexel's *oeuvre*] were made by Anglicans or Non-Conformists and published without any conscious attempt at concealment of publisher or place of publication. On the contrary, English versions of works by this German Jesuit received official imprimaturs from the Bishop of London and were dedicated to [...] peers of the realm'. Blom, 'A German Jesuit and his Anglican Readers', p. 46. See also Alan R. Young, 'English Translations of the Works of Jeremias Drexel 1632–1700' in Pedro F. Campa and Peter M. Daly, eds, *Emblematic Images and Religious Texts. Studies in Honor of G. Richard Dimler SJ*, Early Modern Catholicism and the Visual Arts Series, Vol. 2, Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2010, pp. 183–201.

⁸⁵ The title page of the 1622 *Zodiacus* states both that it is 'larger than the first' and 'augmented'.

the earlier edition, assuring them that the new replacement is 'more correct and more comprehensive than its predecessor'. The *imprimatur* was issued in September 1621 by Christoph Grenzing on behalf of the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Mutio Vitelleschi,⁸⁶ and the standard *Zodiac* duly appeared the following year.

The central structure of the work – 12 sermons each treating a devotional theme – is organized around a rhetorical apparatus of the kind for which Drexel was thereafter to be so well known, and the relationship with Raphael Sadeler was in place too. As Alan R. Young points out: 'Instantly noticeable [...] to any potential reader are the mnemonic devices in the form of emblems [...] placed at the beginning of each meditation.'⁸⁷ These 12 engravings by Sadeler depict in turn a burning candle ('By [which] we may clearly discern the many graces of the Lord'); a skull ('symbolizing the ever-needed preparation of all souls for death'); a pyx or chalice ('by which is signified the frequent observance of the holy sacraments of confession and communion'); a bare altar ('which signifies the renunciation of all possessions'); a rose bush ('which signifies patience in the midst of long affliction'); a fig tree ('symboliz[ing] the injunction to 'Hear the word of God''); a tobacco plant (representing 'alms offered with a generous heart to the needy'); a cypress (signifying 'an abject opinion of ourselves'); a pair of crossed pikestaffs encircled by an olive wreath ('as if to say: 'Love your enemies''); a rod and scourge ('signifying our detestation of past sins'); an anchor ('representing the propensity of our will to good'); and a lute ('by which is conveyed the moderation of our passions'). While some of these concordances may be clear, others are not, and need to be lent meaning by Drexel so that the connection is remembered thereafter. As a reinforcement of his symbolic intentions, and a culminating re-presentation of them to the memory, he includes an extended coda entitled 'Crown of the Signs of Predestination, & the Scarcity of the Predestined', which contains a summation of his principal contentions, an account of his interpretation of the concept of predestination and a reminder of how each *signum* relates to the abiding message of Christian self-direction. 'Never allow your choice or calling to waver', he instructs, directly quoting from the Apostle Peter, 'then there will be no danger of your stumbling'.⁸⁸

In addition, Sadeler supplied a composite engraving, between the Dedication and the main text, which includes all 12 'Signs of Predestination' harmoniously

⁸⁶ Christoph Grenzing (1567–1636), Provincial of the Upper German Province of the Society of Jesus from 1618 to 1624; Mutio Vitelleschi (1563–1645), from 1615 the sixth Superior General of the Society of Jesus.

⁸⁷ Young, 'Drexel's *The Christians Zodiacke*', p. 259.

⁸⁸ *Zodiacus christianus*, 'Crown of the Signs of Predestination & the Scarcity of the Predestined'. The quotation is from 2 *Peter* 1.

arranged and with a numbered key to explain the significance of each, and an illustrated frontispiece and colophon. The frontispiece is clearly a symbolic representation of the Last Judgment: above the central space containing the title and author's name, Christ is shown standing on top of a sphere, with a lily to his right and a sword to his left – symbols respectively of innocence and guilt, a commonplace in Renaissance and Baroque symbolism. Beneath the figure of Christ are two angels, and beneath these figures are depictions (on the left) of a crown and sceptre, and (on the right) a flaming sword. 'This engraving [...] and the use that Drexel then made of the emblems that follow indicate that his purpose was to construct a set of mnemonic devices, one for each of the extended prose meditations that followed each sign in the body of his book.'⁸⁹ Placed appropriately at the head of each chapter or 'Sign' of the *Zodiacus*, the relevant illustration is accompanied by a Latin motto, a Biblical quotation and a passage of explanation which Drexel uses to broach his principal argument. The engravings themselves conform exactly to Peter M. Daly's definition of 'emblem' in its strict technical sense:

The emblem is composed of three parts, for which the Latin names seem most useful: *inscriptio*, *pictura*, and *scriptio*. A short motto or quotation introduces the emblem [...] and it functions as the *inscriptio*. The *pictura* itself may depict one or several objects [...] Beneath the *pictura* comes a prose or verse quotation from some learned source or from the emblemist himself, which functions as a *scriptio*.⁹⁰

By adopting this procedure, Drexel is sequentially commending to his readers a schematic ordering of life's experience, a complete substructural pattern of guidance and devotional self-instruction which is then replicated rhetorically as the text itself unfolds.⁹¹ This suggests a 'figure' or 'scheme' in the early-modern astrological sense, but although Drexel adopts the apparatus of astrology (from the title of his book onwards) he signally does not use its content: in fact the

⁸⁹ Young, 'Drexel's *The Christians Zodiacke*', p. 257.

⁹⁰ Peter M. Daly, *Literature in the Light of the Emblem: Structural Parallels Between the Emblem and Literature in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 2nd edn, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998, p. 7.

⁹¹ Drexel's manner of associating emblems with edifying commentary or explanation in order to present a unified message, quite as much as the content of his homilies, itself exerted a noteworthy influence. The celebrated English poet and emblemist Francis Quarles (1592–1644), for example, is said to have been impressed by Drexel's practice in this regard. See Michael Bath, *Speaking Pictures: English Emblem Books and Renaissance Culture*, London: Longman, 1994, p. 227.

practice is implicitly Christianized through his appropriation of its forms.⁹² There is a performative element to his explications. Given the genesis of the *Zodiacus* in Drexel's public appearances in the pulpit, one might imagine him gesturing purposefully towards the tapers (Sign I), chalice (Sign III) or altar (Sign IV) at appropriate moments in the church where he was speaking. Other *signa* would not, obviously, feature so prominently in his readers' church-lives, but in all cases Drexel strives to infuse rhetorical energy into the substance of his writing.

The Dedication of the *Zodiacus* not only pays its customary dues,⁹³ it serves as a prefatory showcase to exhibit what Drexel is going to do, and more particularly the way in which he is going to do it. The dedicatee is Johann (1578–1638), second Count (and from 1623 the first *Fürst*, or 'prince') of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen after the Hohenzollern lands were divided into three parts in 1576.⁹⁴ The count is lauded handsomely and at length, as is his illustrious family ('the worth proper to your bloodline shines forth wonderfully'), and the dedication soon reveals itself as a tissue of allusions and learned references laid out to set the tone for what follows. The ostentation of Drexel's eulogy neatly demonstrates what he can do, all – of course – in the pride-deflecting service of a higher authority. The comprehensive span of his learning is clear from the beginning. As well as allusions to King David and St Ambrose (both favourite sources), there are references to or borrowings from, *inter alia*, Gregoras, Aulus Gellius, Apion 'Grammaticus' ('the cymbal of the world'), Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Suetonius, Plautus, 'Horace, the poet of Venus' and an indented composite quotation from

⁹² On Drexel's place in an early seventeenth-century culture which sought to replace and Christianize the pagan symbols of prevailing zodiac systems, see M. Mendillo and A. Shapiro, 'Scripture in the Sky: Jeremias Drexel, Julius Schiller, and the Christianizing of the Constellations' in Enrico Maria Corsini, ed., *The Inspiration of Astronomical Phenomena VI*, Astronomical Society of the Pacific Conference Series, Vol. 441, Orem: Utah Valley University, 2011, pp. 181–96.

⁹³ Dedications in Drexel tend to be political, from *De aeternitatis considerationes* (1620), dedicated to Maximilian and Elisabeth, onwards. See Felicia Englmann, *Sphärenharmonie und Mikrokosmos: das politische Denken des Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680)*, Cologne: Böhlau, 2006, p. 81.

⁹⁴ Unlike the Brandenburg Hohenzollerns, the cadet branch represented by Johann – the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringens – remained Catholic. Like his predecessors and (until 1806) descendants, Johann was a fief ('imperial immediacy') of the Holy Roman Empire and a noble vassal of the Holy Roman Emperor. The Emperor from 1619 to 1637 was Ferdinand II (1578–1637), a member of the House of Habsburg, King of Bohemia, King of Hungary. Writing of the Habsburg nexus between art, patronage and political power at this time, Hugh Trevor-Roper evokes the Habsburgs' 'continuous interest in the arts' and the picture thus painted of 'the distinct phases of the great ideological crisis of the time'. *Princes and Artists. Patronage and Ideology at Four Habsburg Courts, 1517–1633*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1976, p. 8.

Juvenal's *Satires*. Some of these authorities are unexpected: Drexel's art is to find a fitting niche for them all. In the Dedication as elsewhere in the work, he marshals a considerable quantity of erudition to demonstrate that the public accoutrements of scholarship are only ever secondary to the main purpose: he is pre-empting the charge that he may not be aware of this. 'We do not make ourselves immortals in Heaven through great knowledge, sundry writings or vast learning [...] This Heavenly doctrine is attained not by making ourselves more learned, but by making ourselves better.'⁹⁵ As an exemplary advocate of 'excerpting', Drexel understands that the key to rhetorical success is propriety: 'Vain are those mortals who conceive a vast thirst for knowledge, and misuse learning for their own pleasure! How may we be improved by Tacitus, if our life is unalterable? How by the illustrious Suetonius, if we are in the obscurity of error?'⁹⁶ As protestations of humility go, these sentiments are as assured and confident as anything in Drexel. The importance of due modesty is a motif in his writings: he is scathing of those whose vanity overcomes them, and careful not to attract similar accusations to himself.⁹⁷

Drexel's procedure in each Sign is to underscore the importance of his lesson with unimpeachable excerpts from or allusions to the Bible, and a smaller number of references to (and sometimes quotations from) classical sources.⁹⁸ Where he does not refer or quote directly, he paraphrases. His own text is interwoven completely with this dense allusive fabric: the effect, upon readers, is enveloping. The meshwork of references produced in this way is in turn enlivened by careful usage of rhetorical 'colours', to the extent that withholding attention becomes impossible.⁹⁹ In Sign VII, to take an example typical in length and referential catchment, he quotes from Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Tobit, Baruch, Genesis, Ecclesiasticus, Colossians, Matthew and Luke. Exegesis other than his own is supplied by Gregory of Nazianzus, Pope Gregory I, Cyprian and John Chrysostom. In order to illuminate his sermon on the necessity of alms-giving, he includes an anecdote about the practice of the City Censors 'in ancient times' 'to visit the houses of the citizens, to see whether their clothes were moth-eaten, their meat wormy, their bread mouldy, and with good reason: if such a visit were made today, some would be found who prefer to leave their possessions

⁹⁵ 'Dedication'.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ See Ralf Georg Bogner, *Die Bezähmung der Zunge: Literatur und Disziplinierung der Alltagskommunikation in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Tübingen: Niemayer, 1997, p. 133.

⁹⁸ Drexel scrupulously balances his Old Testament / New Testament citations in even proportions; in turn the Bible outweighs classical sources by roughly ten to one, but there is at least one major non-Biblical, non-exegetical source in each chapter.

⁹⁹ On these stylistic considerations see Pörnbacher, *Jeremias Drexel*, pp. 134–44.

to vermin rather than give them to the poor'.¹⁰⁰ Anecdotal *aperçus* are enlisted for their vividness and presumed moral leverage, deriving always from a suitable classical source. There is typically, for instance, a reference to the Anazarbians of Cilicia which makes a point about concupiscence:

The Anazarbian people of Cilicia attributed the fecundity of their olive trees to the chastity of their maidens, and so allowed only them to plant the trees and gather the fruit. Let Christians be assured that there is such an enmity between our olive of mercy and the myrtle of Venus that they cannot be grown in the same enclosure, and that alms which are offered by a concupiscent soul are unworthy of God.¹⁰¹

The longest chapter of the *Zodiacus* is Sign IX: a *tour de force* of rhetorical orchestration. The emblematic engraving here is a pair of crossed pikestafes wreathed by olive leaves, and the lesson is inspired by the need to love one's enemies. The Scriptural authorities in this case are, in the order in which they first occur: Matthew, Acts, Psalms, 1 Corinthians, Proverbs, 1 John, Luke, Ecclesiasticus, Romans, Job, Deuteronomy, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Kings, Baruch, Colossians, Leviticus, Ezekiel, 2 Samuel and Hebrews. To these he adds salutary excerpts from Ambrose, John Chrysostom and Jerome. There is a reference to Aristotle as 'prince of philosophers'. Other sources or points of reference are: Diocletian, Lactantius, Paterculus, Constantine, Phocion, Pompey the Great, Augustus, Julius Caesar and Tertullian (this last a favourite). There are inset quotations from Plautus' *Poenulus* and Juvenal's *Satire 1*. Drexel also includes an anecdote from Rufinus of Aquileia ('and sundry other authorities on the Greeks') concerning 'one Sifoius, an old holy man'.¹⁰² Throughout the *Zodiacus* as a whole he draws on a remarkable roster of worthies: Antiochus Epiphanes, Antoninus of Florence, Bede, Bias of Priene, Blossius (Louis de Blois), Caesarius of Arles, Cassiodorus, Epictetus, Galen, Gennadius of Marseille, Jean Gerson, Hieronymus Platus, Hippocrates, Isidore of Seville, Louis of Granada, Mark the Anchorite of Athens, Philippus Diez 'Lusitanus', Polybius, Seneca, Solinus, Sozomen, Stilpo of Megara, Themistocles, Theophylact of Ohrid, Thomas à Kempis.¹⁰³ Of the Fathers and Doctors, Ambrose, Augustine and John Chrysostom are preferred above all. Many others are referenced more than once. One of the points Drexel is making, therefore, is that in listening to him we are in good company: no need to worry about Drexelian idiosyncrasy. Another is

¹⁰⁰ *Zodiacus christianus*, Sign VII.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Sign IX.

¹⁰³ Brief biographical details on less familiar authorities are supplied in the Notes to the Translation, as and when they occur in the text.

that the use of purposeful language may transcend the individual person of the speaker. When so much is at stake we all, as it were, need to speak the same language and are collectively summoned to the role. These Biblical and classical voices are invoked to reinforce and complement Drexel's own contentions.¹⁰⁴ They are absolutely not included to lend complexity, subtlety or sophistication (in which Drexel was not much interested), nor to serve as foils for theological debate. They show, rather, how wise and pious minds across the ages have had a tendency to converge on what matters the most. Drexel is desecrating what seems to him to be a deep unitary intention, one of quite striking catholicity. These were, in other words, the 'right' books to read, not least in precluding any whiff of spiritual sedition.¹⁰⁵ That many of his sources would have been unknown to all but a tiny fraction of the author's enormous readership was not important, and did not in fact appear to matter. What did matter was that however many authorities were brought to bear, the directness of the central message was never compromised. Sign IX concludes with a fulmination against all those who steadfastly refuse to heed this congregation of virtue:

Does that iron soul of yours still breathe with desire of vengeance? Do you still say: 'To Hell with my enemies, and all other evils. May revenge, death and every ill beset my enemies'? Why does this hatred of your enemies endure? Do you not heed Christ's commandment? If you do not, then go with all those other Christians like you, by whichever road you choose, and you will not stray from the path which will surely lead you to the kingdom of the Devil; even with your eyes closed the path will take you unerringly to Hell. Your journey there is certain because truly you have lost your way; and certain too it is that he who will not cease hating his enemy cannot love God.¹⁰⁶

All Drexel's chapters close in this kind of manner. There is a marked penchant for the peroration. It brings to a focus the author's sustained efforts, evinced across the entire volume, in transmuting oratory into rhetoric. They are effects

¹⁰⁴ On the relationship of seventeenth-century Catholic pulpit oratory to classical rhetoric as well as Biblical allusion see Jean-Robert Armogathe, 'Plaire, instruire et édifier: les traits spécifiques de la rhétorique de la chaire', *Littérature*, 149 (mars 2008: 'La Rhétorique et les Autres'), 45–55. As Louis Châtellier indicates, this is a key factor in Drexel's capacity to hold audiences and readers: 'Genèse de bibliothèques: les jésuites et les oratoriens en Alsace et en Lorraine vers 1630' in Bernard Dompnier and Marie-Hélène Froeschlé-Chopard, eds, *Les Religieux et leurs livres à l'époque moderne*, Clermont Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2000, p. 47.

¹⁰⁵ See Elfriede Moser-Rath, 'Lesestoff fürs Kirchengvolk. Lektüreeinweisungen in katholischen Predigten der Barockzeit', *Fabula*, 29, 1–2 (1988), 48–72.

¹⁰⁶ Sign IX.

which are meant to be remembered. In Sign VIII he treats his readers to a blood-curdling excursus on the sin of pride:

Out, O vain souls! The gates of Heaven are closed to such peacocks [...] Shall we look upon ourselves? What a lovely red fruit! But it is all worm-eaten within: corruption, disease and death have taken up residence. Shall we look into our own hearts? What a dreadful pit we see, a nest of vipers and serpents. Woe to us!¹⁰⁷

Sign V, whose burden is the need for patience in the midst of affliction, includes among its virtuosities a gruesome catalogue of martyrdoms in which the reader, as usual, must be spared no details:

Abraham was variously afflicted and perplexed, Joseph sold by his brothers, David most vilely persecuted by his son, Isaias sawn in half, Ezechias' brains were dashed out on rocks, Jeremiah was stoned to death, Micheas put to death by the sword, Amos had a nail driven into his temples, Daniel was thrown to the lions, Naboth buried under a pile of stones, Elisha mocked, Job so ulcerous that he was spat on, Tobit was blinded, the innocent Susanna condemned – and these are only a small number.¹⁰⁸

The devastating ends to which such rhetorical firepower can be put become, in the concluding 'Crown of the Signs of Predestination', a theme in their own right:

Bertold of Regensburg, the Franciscan brother famed in Germany in years past for his preaching, was once inveighing against a particular vice when a woman in the congregation, suffering terrible pangs of conscience, became so afraid at what she was hearing that she fell down as if dead in the midst of the throng. But being restored to life by the prayers of the assembly, she said that she had stood before the tribunal of God, where there were gathered 60,000 dead souls of all sorts, Christian as well as heathen: and of these, a mere three were sent to Purgatory, all the rest being condemned to eternal hellfire. How true it is, that MANY enter through the wide and spacious door to perdition!¹⁰⁹

It is safe to deduce that this is a manner of preaching with which Drexel empathized.

Fire and brimstone aside, Drexel is alive to the usage of carefully chosen analogies, comparisons and similes. His rhetoric would not work anything like

¹⁰⁷ Sign VIII.

¹⁰⁸ Sign V.

¹⁰⁹ *Zodiacus*, 'Crown'. Drexel recounts a very similar anecdote in *De aeternitate considerationes*.

as successfully, after all, if it were all crescendo. He is tuned in to balance, and measure. Clock analogies interested him, for example. *Horologium auxiliaris tutelaris angeli* ('The Guardian-Angel's Clock') was published in 1622, the same year as the standard *Zodiacus*, in which latter work the author discusses 'the propensity of our will to good' in these terms: 'The city clocks are all set by the principal clock; why then should the will of man, like a little clock, not be set by that great celestial timepiece, the will of God?'¹¹⁰ On a number of occasions he draws from a well of nautical or maritime analogies:

What indeed is this life of ours, the loss of which we so fear, but a scene of mockeries, a sea of miseries where – regardless of the vessel in which we set sail, whether decked with gold, silver and precious stones or mere wood – we cannot avoid the crashing waves, the perilous rocks or the dangerous flats?¹¹¹

Or:

What is the point of a mariner readying the yardarm, hoisting the sails and fitting the oars, if, as soon as he has left the coast for the open sea he returns straight back to the shore from which he departed? We are the same as [...] that mariner who sets sail but at the first gust of wind returns to port. There is nothing we say more often than: 'I want to act, to change my ways', and yet nothing is acted upon and our ways remain unchanged.¹¹²

At other times his analogies are taken from the plant and animal kingdoms.¹¹³ In Sign V, God is likened to a 'Celestial Gardener' who cultivates the Elect as a plantsman cultivates fragrant roses, whereas in Sign VIII, 'He cuts down [the proud] as easily as a gardener lops those shoots which grow higher than the rest'. When Drexel considers the sinful habit of back-sliding, he reminds his readers that 'the fox will not be caught twice in the same trap, the wolf will not fall into

¹¹⁰ Sign XI.

¹¹¹ Sign II.

¹¹² Sign X.

¹¹³ Floral analogies recur throughout Drexel's works, most notably in the extended treatment of sunflower imagery given in the 1627 *Heliotropium, seu Conformatio humanae voluntatis cum divina*; and a sunflower analogy occurs also in the opening lines of Sign XI of the *Zodiacus*. For a discussion of the 'part narrative and part symbolic' engravings which accompany Drexel's account of the varying stages of mankind's conformity with the will of God, and the way in which Drexel's motifs foreshadow Van Dyck's, see John Peacock, 'Painting and Visuality in Van Dyck's *Self-Portrait with a Sunflower*' in Caroline Van Eck and Edward Winters, eds, *Dealing with the Visual: Art History, Aesthetics and Visual Culture*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, p. 115.

the same pit, the dog will avoid the cudgel'.¹¹⁴ Watchfulness is all: 'How often do healthy olives shrivel into bad fruit?'¹¹⁵ Metaphors and analogies must pertain to the quotidian realities of his readers' lives. The message may be celestial, but the medium is often worldly or at any rate 'earthly'.¹¹⁶ When God is not a gardener he is, for instance, the 'Great Potter', and Drexel the product of his wheel.¹¹⁷ One metaphorical roll will frequently lead by association to another. Continuing his theme of humans' ingrained failure to learn from past mistakes, Drexel writes:

We are like those swordsmen who skilfully and cleverly brandish their weapons until they see the naked blade of their opponents, at which point they run away and expose themselves to the very wounds which they had sought to avoid. We are like those runners who are casually boastful at the start of a race, but break into a sweat as soon as they start running and have to give up before the race is half run.¹¹⁸

Drexel's emblematic engravings are themselves visual metaphors, or 'objective correlatives' in the Eliot sense. So too are the textual images which are their analogues. This is spelt out in Sign XII, for instance, where in the drawing out of his sermon Drexel several times returns to the aptness of the lute as a symbol of the tempering of disorderly passions:

If we are to believe Plato, the body is a lute, and the soul a lutenist, who tunes one string, then another: it moderates the eyes, then the tongue; now the ears, now the hands. When lust or impatience rise too high, it brings them back down to the right pitch [...] The principal care of the Predestined one is to examine daily the instrument of his passions, fighting his anger, suppressing his envy, stirring himself from sloth, moderating his joy and mitigating his sadness. He is forever tuning the strings, tightening some and loosening others, until all agree in harmony.¹¹⁹

A number of analogies are aphoristic in their simplicity: 'An angry man is like the stone called *pyrite*, which sparks into flame wherever it is struck with a flint'.¹²⁰ 'Just as gold is tried by the touchstone, so are the thoughts of men revealed by the

¹¹⁴ Sign X.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ See Karl Pörnbacher, 'Die irdische "Wolredenheit" des Jeremias Drexel. Zum 400. Geburtstag des schwäbischen Barockpredigers', *Jahrbuch des Historischen Vereins Dillingen*, 83 (1981), 73–82.

¹¹⁷ Sign II.

¹¹⁸ Sign X.

¹¹⁹ Sign XII.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

Gospel of Christ'.¹²¹ More broadly there is a tendency, to which Drexel gives free rein in every chapter of the *Zodiacus*, to extend metaphorical *exempla* into small narratives of their own, so that they amount to self-contained fabulistic tales enclosing individual integrity: he is aware that no sermon – however recondite – must be without a narrative dimension, and his grasp of the parabolic anecdote is appropriately sure. It demonstrates his understanding of linguistic economy into the bargain. The metaphor will tell its own story, with a modicum of explanation required.¹²² As always, he has his readers in mind first and foremost: they must be able to seize immediately what he means.¹²³

Other rhetorical stratagems reveal Drexel ensuring that his readers are completely involved at every point with what he is saying. Often he addresses them in direct vocative appeal: 'O my Christians!' These appeals to readers' consciences may be understood as bearing a humanistic stamp, but the pure asceticism of the message is never affected.¹²⁴ Almost every chapter of the *Zodiacus* demonstrates him as a doyen of the rhetorical question. 'Which person', he asks, 'lying in a hard bed, is not prompt to rise from it? Is it not only they who luxuriate in the softest down who make excuses and put off rising, unwilling to quit their nests?'¹²⁵ Addressing the need for regular recourse to the Eucharist, his questions become quasi-catechistic:

Is your soul defiled? Then hasten to the Eucharist, which is the fountain of purity.
Are you sick? You will find it a sovereign remedy and a proven antidote against all the
ills of the mind. Are you hungry? It is the bread of angels. Are you frozen with cold?

¹²¹ Sign VI.

¹²² 'Explanation does not replace the metaphor but rather stands in the secondary relationship of literary criticism to a literary work. In other words, the metaphor may "give rise to thought" as a stimulus for theological systematization but it remains, not only as the origin, but also the test of such work'. Dan R. Stiver, *The Philosophy of Religious Language: Sign, Symbol and Story*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, p. 195.

¹²³ 'Analogy as a linguistic device deals with language that has been stretched to fit new applications, yet fits the new situation without generating for the native speaker any imaginative strain'. Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, Oxford: Clarendon, 2002, p. 64.

¹²⁴ See Paul Richard Blum, *Philosophenphilosophie und Schulphilosophie: Typen des Philosophierens in der Neuzeit*, Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998, p. 61. For Benno Hubensteiner, Drexel is the principal ascetic writer of seventeenth-century Germany: *Biographienwege: Lebensbilder aus dem alten Bayern*, Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 1984, p. 58. More recently Waltraud Pulz has reaffirmed Drexel as the most important German ascetic writer of the age: *Nüchternes Kalkül – Verzehrende Leidenschaft: Nahrungsabstinenz im 16. Jahrhundert*, Cologne: Böhlau, 2007, p. 187.

¹²⁵ Sign II.

Hurry to it as to a burning fire. Are you attacked by your enemies? Take heart; it is an arsenal of all manner of weapons. Are you afflicted with sorrow? It is the wine which cheers the heart of man. Do you seek delicacies? They are nowhere to be found but here in this banquet, the feast of kings.¹²⁶

In another modulation, Drexel anticipates his readers' own questions:

'But perhaps,' you may ask, 'you are known to be a learned man?' This is a question well known to me, as is the status which many Doctors build upon it. Oh, the proud erudition of mortal wit! Who ever arrived at such a plateau of learning, or such an advanced age, without being ignorant of far more than ever he had learned?¹²⁷

Drexel's imperious queries build and accumulate under their own momentum. The voice of the pulpit preacher melds with the mnemonic stratagems of the rhetorician. It is yet another method by which he places responsibility for their actions at his readers' door. For them, there is no shying away from accountability. Answers are expected of them. The truth is staring them in the face: ignorance is no excuse, and recidivism unpardonable.¹²⁸ The relationship of rhetoric and truth-telling mattered to Drexel: it was a way of focusing language into purpose.¹²⁹ Anaphoric words or phrases are often strung together in chains, which develops into a favourite device. In Sign IV Drexel recounts of 'that holy man St Francis of Assisi that he spent whole nights on end considering and

¹²⁶ Sign III.

¹²⁷ Sign VI.

¹²⁸ As Piero Camporesi indicates, Drexel subscribed to the view that the human body was a kind of microcosmic battleground on which the forces of good and evil were perpetually engaged. Militaristic metaphors are among the devices used whenever the ascetic regulation of appetites is addressed. At worst, the body can become 'a mephitic micro-hell': see *La casa dell'eternità*, Milan: Garzanti, 1987, p. 55.

¹²⁹ On Drexel's exemplary campaign against the 'vices of the tongue' see Toon Van Houdt, 'Word Histories, and Beyond: Towards a Conceptualization of Fraud and Deceit in Early Modern Times' in Toon Van Houdt, *et al.*, eds, *On the Edge of Truth and Honesty: Principles and Strategies of Fraud and Deceit in the Early Modern Period*, Intersections: Yearbook for Early Modern Studies, Leiden: Brill, 2002, p. 5; and the same author's 'Hieremias Drexel's Emblem Book *Orbis Phaëthon* (1629): Moral Message and Strategies of Persuasion' in K.A.E. Enenkel and A.S.Q. Visser, eds, *Mundus Emblematicus: Studies in Neo-Latin Emblem Books*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2003, p. 329. Also Bettina Lindorfer, 'Peccatum linguae and the Punishment of Speech Violations in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times' in Jean E. Godsall-Myers, ed., *Speaking in the Medieval World*, Leiden: Brill, 2003, p. 34. Drexel's most blistering denunciation of mendacious language occurs in the *Orbis Phaëthon*, although it is a theme to which he frequently returns in other writings.

repeating with delight those short words: “My God is all.” This is an example to us all: we should emulate the saint and glory with him in our needs by saying: “*My God is all*.” Never failing to practise what he preached, Drexel repeats the phrase at strategic moments throughout Sign IV until it becomes a refrain. Even where specific phrasing is not repeated, the semantic import of what Drexel is saying is commonly recapitulated in slightly different language as he moves from paragraph to paragraph. The message must be burned into readers’ minds: the author’s invitation to them to consider their eternal destiny is presented as an offer they are not in a position to refuse.

Each symbolic chapter is advertised as a sign of ‘divine predestination’, and references to the ‘Elect’ or ‘Predestined’ fill Drexel’s sermons in the *Zodiacus*. There is, in his mind, no conflict or even tension between ‘predestination’ as he understands it and the oft-repeated injunction that readers must subject their precarious lives to continual scrutiny and strive always to keep to the straight and narrow path. His impassioned pleas and charged diction are sufficient evidence of a burning need for connectivity with listeners and readers in the restless effort to prevent them from falling into moral laziness. By predestination, then, he does not mean fatalism or even determinism. He is certain that the responsibility for desiring salvation falls squarely on his hearers’ shoulders. In fact, what exactly Drexel intends by his use of the term ‘predestination’ is best elucidated by reference to St Augustine – by whose words he claims to be guided – and Augustinian predestination has been characterized thus:

Only grace can set humanity free. Yet grace is not bestowed universally; it is only granted to some individuals. As a result, only some will be saved – those to whom grace is given. Predestination, for Augustine, involves the recognition that God withholds the means of salvation from those who are not elected [...] It is important to note that Augustine emphasized that this did not mean that some were predestined to damnation. It meant that God had selected some from the mass of fallen humanity. The chosen few were indeed destined for salvation. The remainder were not, according to Augustine, actively condemned to damnation; they were merely not elected to salvation.¹³⁰

This is the interpretation of the concept which, generally speaking, Drexel accepts. He addresses it at the beginning of his coda, the ‘Crown of the Signs of Predestination’, stating that: ‘A man has no-one but himself to blame, if he cannot perceive within himself any sign of *predestination*: it is not randomly that God

¹³⁰ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, p. 466.

has predestined anyone to Heaven or Hell'.¹³¹ Drexel's quoted sources here are St Augustine, St Bernard and St Prosper, although he is not so much concerned with defending the concept intellectually as presenting it authoritatively as an objective fact. It is not by any means an interpretation free from controversy, but Drexel was not, in this sense, a controversialist and there are no theological debates aired in the *Zodiacus* in any case. As a populist he never ranked this as a priority, and was not much involved with the theological character of dissent, despite the respectability in contemporary Jesuit pedagogy of *controversia*. He was indeed 'not a theologian in the strict sense of the word. His aim was to spread devotion and faith through books and sermons which could be read and listened to by everyone'.¹³² His plentiful denunciations and invective are never directed towards doctrinal idiosyncrasy as he would see it *per se*, always towards those whose lives were – very broadly conceived – unchristian. It was his mission to confront these deviants unflinchingly:

Today there is an abundance of sermons, but very few who listen to them are willing to mend their ways as a result: vices are condemned, but not expunged. Men are, indeed, so unwilling to expunge them that they do not even want it mentioned. *Many are invited, but not all are chosen*: all too few, alas.¹³³

¹³¹ *Zodiacus*, 'Crown'.

¹³² Stefano Miniati, *Nicholas Steno's Challenge for Truth: Reconciling Science and Faith*, Milan: Franco Angeli, 2009, p. 53. On Drexel and 'uncontroversiality' see also Blom, 'What Do Translations Transmit?' 3.

¹³³ *Zodiacus*, 'Crown'.

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A Note on the Text

The version of Jeremias Drexel's *Zodiacus christianus* used for the preparation of this critical edition is that published by Anna Bergin in Munich in 1622. This is universally acknowledged to be the first 'full' edition of the text, and the basis upon which all subsequent re-editions and translations were made. Drexel himself signals the authoritative status of the 1622 edition in his prefatory notice 'To The Reader'. The full title of the work is: *Zodiacus christianus locupletatus: seu signa XII divinae praedestinationis; totidem symbolis explicata ab Hieremia Drexelio, e Societate Iesu*. It is a considerably expanded version of an embryonic tract, also entitled *Zodiacus christianus*, published in 1618 as a loose aggregation of transcribed sermons for Lent. The earlier volume did not mention Drexel as author although, as with the *editio princeps* of 1622, the engraver of the accompanying illustrations, Raphael Sadeler, is mentioned in several places. Drexel is prominently mentioned in the 1622 edition and thereafter. The story of the transition between the early sketch and the first standard edition is told in my Introduction, along with an account of Drexel's relationships with his publishers and with Sadeler. This first standard edition is in small format (32mo); its instant popularity ensured that larger-format editions were soon to follow. Other details of the work's publication, reception and destiny in Germany and further afield, and its place in the Drexel canon, are also discussed in the Introduction and its accompanying footnotes..

The 1622 *Zodiacus* was published to high standards of typographical specification, and the lines of Sadeler's sedulously wrought engravings are clear. However, in common with many first editions of that or other ages, there are some small printing mistakes, which my translation rectifies. The second page of Sign II (above the introductory emblem) mistakenly refers to it as 'Sign I'; a similar error occurs at the start of Sign V, wrongly announced as 'Sign IV'; and in Sign VIII a footnote refers to 'Psalm 110' when in fact the quotation is from Psalm 101.

The copy used for this edition is housed in the Rare Books Section of the Feneley Library at the Centre for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, Oxford. It is the only copy of the 1622 Munich edition in Oxford. Despite Drexel's remarkable popularity, copies of this authoritative first edition of the *Zodiacus* are very few and far between, and it is the later reprints which are much more likely to be found in academic libraries. As far as Oxford is concerned, there are two copies of the 1634 Cologne edition in the Bodleian Libraries, and one copy apiece of the 1632 Cologne edition in Magdalen College and Balliol College. As

a unique edition of the first standard printing, the copy in the Feneley Library is therefore an object of considerable interest and rarity.

A Note on the Translation

In presenting Drexel's highly particular rhetorical and linguistic register to a modern readership, the governing principle has naturally been first and foremost to preserve a judicious balance between the spirit and the letter of his Latin. Whilst adhering to lexical accuracy, therefore, I have striven at the same time to convey something of the orotund and slightly archaic Baroque tone which characterizes the *Zodiacus* and all Drexel's other works, informed as they are by Biblical cadences and rhetorical colorations deriving from the author's training in classical scholarship, Jesuit pedagogy and the rhythm of his own stirring pulpit performances. Drexel's use of language and rhetoric, so central to the phenomenon of his popularity, is analysed fully in the Introduction.

The typographical arrangement of Drexel's text, page by page, has been retained in the translation. I have kept in place his frequent italics and emphatic upper-case letters, and followed his division and specialized enumeration of paragraphs. The author's practice was to supply (most of) his quotations, allusions and references with an identifying footnote. This was for more than mere convenience: the tagging of supplementary material by these means formed a crucial part of Drexel's instructive strategy of memory-cultivation, and, together with the engravings, was intended to fix meanings in his readers' minds and then to assist in the right association of ideas. In the cases where Drexel does this, I have placed his references in brackets in the body of the text, immediately after the passage being alluded to or cited. In addition, I have supplied a number of my own endnotes to identify, where they occur in the text, some of the lesser known of Drexel's quoted authorities.

Biblical quotations are taken from the 'New Jerusalem Bible', under the General Editorship of the Very Rev. Dom J. Henry Wansbrough. All other citations included by Drexel are translated by myself.

The entire text has been translated, from the dedication, *imprimatur* and other front matter, to the final guarantee of protection and *privilegio* issued by Ferdinand II to safeguard the engravings of Raphael Sadeler which accompany Drexel's words.

This translation constitutes the first English version of the *Zodiacus christianus* since the seventeenth century, and the volume as a whole the only critical edition of any of his works.

Ad Franc. H. M. G. Zellam



**ZODIACVS
CHRISTIANVS**

locupletatus:
ad Franc. H. M. G. Zellam
signa XII. diuina
PRÆDESTINA-
TIONIS
Totidem symbolis explicata

Ab
Hicremia Drexelio,
è Societate IESV.

Editio secunda, altero tanto auctior.
Raphaël Sadelerus,
imaginibus exornauit, et
venum proposuit.

MONACI.

Cum priuilegio. In Sac. Cas. Maies.



AD SCEPTVM ET AD



CORONAM



AD GLADIVM ET AD



FLAMMA

A
CHRISTIAN ZODIAC
augmented; or
Twelve Signs of Divine Predestination;
These Same Symbols Explained by
JEREMIAS DREXEL, of
THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

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MDCXXII



To The Most Illustrious Count Johann of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, and Woringen; Lord of Haigerloch & Wehrstein; Hereditary Chamberlain of the Holy Roman Empire; Most Serene and Majestic Lord of the Privy Council of the Duke of Bavaria; Lord and Master of His House, and Chamberlain.

I am summoned, Illustrious Lord, by your singular grace, to petition you, your name and your protection for this book. It is the custom that the properties of great men, their halls, palaces and surrounding towns are called against hostile powers. It follows that a great name prefixed to this book will protect against calumny and malice. This I willed, by making public these writings, but in your auspicious name. It were scarcely possible to do otherwise, as to the good offices or indulgences of others, I have long been indebted. I am put in mind of Gregoras, the Greek writer, on Andronicus¹: It is the case, he said, that adroitness and liberality in human natures are on a superior level of dignity, rendering all souls subservient. Thus in spring it is the delightful flowers which appear to be the most prolific. This is a precept of the wisdom of the Sages: leading men, whose nature partakes of the sublime, although they are themselves of the lower estate of humans, are the most beloved of posterity. Kindness has such power, as do the great ones, bringing about every effect of this kind, joining together and binding. This power is truly yours too: the worth proper to your bloodline shines forth wonderfully here. One might even venture to say that the Counts Hohenzollern do not completely exist in themselves, but are growing always into being. The most splendid Cardinal, your brother, Eitelius Fridericus, of the Imperial Purple, and the veriest apex of reverent splendour, of the surest of judgments, as illustrious for the worth and sanctity of his nature as for his learning, we raise to just such an exalted height: the most modest and human of men among all men, as among the Greats the most sublime. David, greatest King of the Jews, was one of the most praised of such men, as marvelled at by St Ambrose: How meek and beguiling, how humble in spirit, strong in heart, abundant in good nature? Before his reign he brought himself before the whole people. The king made his armies equal with everyone, and through good work kept it so. Strong in his battles, mild in his sovereignty, patient in his sympathy, he was the swiftest to act against injustice. For these reasons was he beloved of all the people, young as he was when called upon to reign and resistant to govern. As an old man he had no wish to join battle, but was prevailed upon, which was what everyone preferred for themselves, rather than what he would have chosen for them. The King of the Hebrews lives and breathes today in some human natures, such as yours, Illustrious Lord, and that of your brother, a Senator of the Imperial Purple. But let us complete the full triad of the Counts Hohenzollern

with that imperial jewel, Johann Georgius, Count Hohenzollern, your cousin, so benevolent in nature, the paragon of eloquence, prudent in judgment! Here is a man of whom the poet might have said:

Happy, wise, noble, and generous,

Happy the orator [...]

[...] By sea and by land, governing the people,

Who more fitting?

Juvenal, *Satires* 4 & 7

He, who is born with talents for his people and a character fitted for mankind! It would not be wrong to say that benevolence is the nursemaid of the Hohenzollerns' progeny. To sum up the importance of the Counts, as once Pliny the Younger adjudged beauty, is most difficult. St Antony is extreme in praises: To season delightfulness with austerity, he says, and add the same sum of kindness to seriousness, is no less difficult than it is great; and I believe that as in life, so in study are austerity and kindness conjoined with all that is most beautiful and human. In you, Illustrious Count, this noblest blending is most exceptionally manifest. You are therefore as worthy to reign as the First Duke of Bavaria, all of whose House are venerated as God, then His Princes, are venerated. Undoubtedly he is among those several who, like you, are to sit at the throne of authority. Or, if we are to credit Gellius², this truth is *humanity*, which links all men not only by the clear means of right-thinking and benevolence, but also through the scholarship of institutions of fine learning, which when sincerely desired and aspired to (says the Athenian), are all that is most human. The discipline and study of the sciences, from the kingdom of the animals to that of mankind, is also to be deemed part of *humanity*. Following Gellius I may, I believe, see all that is most human in you yourself, and as something going back to your earliest years. For you were once numbered amongst the lettered youths of the Gymnasium at Munich, where it was your desire to imbibe the disciplines of humane learning; from this House of the Muses you passed into foreign lands, where many things augmented your erudition; where in wise counsel you learned how to be strong, scaling the heights, learning how to be favoured and loved. Here of course the sentiments of Horace, the poet of Venus, are forever to be felt: the praise of great men is not to be lauded last. It is truly the case that the highest are to be praised before all others. Were it not so, even to

the slightest degree, your reign would seem wronged. Learned humanity when merely frugally or superficially attained, neither your ancestors nor progeny could understand, but that is not the purpose of my eulogy. Suffice it to say that the House of Hohenzollern is among the most ancient and noble, which over past centuries has so flourished as to produce many Bishops, Marquises, Dukes and Electors, which is why now among all the nobility of Germany that family's name stands out above all other illustrious names. The greatest praise is indeed that they have long kept the faith and been among its elders. But in fact my intention is not to write a panegyric to you, so much as recommend to you this little book. The purpose of the book is to demonstrate the path to Heaven, and lead the way to blessed everlasting life.

Apion Grammaticus³, whom Tiberius Caesar called 'the cymbal of the world' (by which Pliny says he means that his voice rang out loudly abroad), gave himself to all time through his writings, and wrote himself into immortality. Bold Apion vowed to be governed by God, and was rewarded with immortality.

This book does not promise immortality, so much as indicate the pathway to it: twelve signs of *Predestination* are clearly shown to support it. We do not make ourselves immortals in Heaven through great knowledge, sundry writings or vast learning, but through the many things that we do and suffer. This Heavenly doctrine is attained not by making ourselves more learned, but by making ourselves better. We are now concerned about excess in literary matters, as in all other things: often it is not life, but scholarly learning of which we treat. Such is the book I commend to you, Illustrious Count, a book in which I speak of the properties of the various months, as they change, and provide the best counsel: a book which I have written for many readers to consult, rather than study. Not many stand out in this regard, and still others have a thirst for knowledge akin to a greed for gold, and there the healthiest course is not to know, rather than run into danger. Vain are those mortals who conceive a vast thirst for knowledge, and misuse learning for their own pleasure! How may we be improved by Tacitus, if our life is unalterable? How by the illustrious Suetonius, if we are in the obscurity of error? How can we draw triumph from our studies without ourselves triumphing? We can either diligently wash away stains with the writings of Plautus, or become besmirched and dirty from them. It is not enough to have knowledge (the major doctrines of Christianity demand this); one should also *act*. It is only too clear that it is not by our writings that we shall be judged by that higher power, but by our deeds, than which nothing is more compelling. Narrow is the path to heaven, and unsuitable for travellers who are infirm of purpose and much of whose time is spent in idleness; it is difficult for the complacent and

cannot be travelled without effort. It is that pathway to blessed eternity which I mean to indicate with this volume. It would be easy indeed to show how to stay close to the path whilst straying from it, which the twelve signs of predestination diligently protect against. The journey to Heaven is, for everyone, a very long one, which everyone's span of years compels him to undertake. There are those who very quickly expire on the road, while an exhausted few are hurried along. For the majority of others it is toilsome labour, surmounting obstacles, passing through brambles and thorns before their journey – which is life – is over. Let us ready ourselves for that journey, acting in the fullness of our spirit. And although progress on the path to eternity is for all of us more distressingly toilsome than merely thinking about keeping to it, or taking the lower path, we must persevere. Any error in this journey is made eternal. It is for this reason that those who would be blessed must not be in doubts or uncertainties; that they may be able to set forth on that journey to eternity is the precious goal of this work – but the journey is arduous. Thorny is the path to the stars, whose end-point is brightly pointed up by these twelve signs. So here a brief commentary on that most lengthy of journeys is presented to you, Illustrious Count: I place it before you as a mark of the boundless esteem in which you are held by all who love you. Reading other books would suffice; but this book is worth nothing if readers do not obtain from it that which they would not obtain, not having read it.

I humbly commend this volume to your Illustrious Lordship.

Munich, this Day of the Glorious and Most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the Year of Christ MDCXXII.

I am Your Illustrious Lordship's Servant in Christ,

Jeremias Drexel, of the Society of Jesus.

TO THE READER

Here you have, good reader, twelve signs of divine Predestination, compiled from what is written in the works of the Saints and Holy Fathers, and, to aid recollection, all the symbols ascribed to them. Allow me then, enquiring friends, to present a zodiacal image of this Predestination. Anything in my writing, however, which is done hurriedly or without due preparation I would desire to expunge and remove. Therefore I implore you, my reader, to discard my earlier *Zodiac*, and replace it with this one, more correct and more comprehensive than its predecessor. I present it here for your daily inspection. It is for you to judge what to take from these signs of Predestination: everything or nothing, one thing or several. Hence it will be easy to assess from the book whether your name is in the list of Life or Death. The closed book will be opened up by the Lord of the World, and he whose name is not in the list of Life will be cast into a lake of fire. Those names are truly written in Heaven, to much rejoicing, and eternally.

APPROBATION of the PROVINCIAL

The trustworthy *Christian Zodiac* of Fr Jeremias Drexel, priest of our Society of Jesus, who has written of twelve Signs of Predestination, is by this Society hereby adjudged and approved. I, *Christophorus Grenzing*, of the Society of Jesus, on behalf of the Upper German Province, by the authority vested in me by the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Mutius Vitelleschi, grant permission for publication. In faith I place here my hand, and by the laws of the Society put my mark.

Munich, September MDCXXI.

Christophorus Grenzing

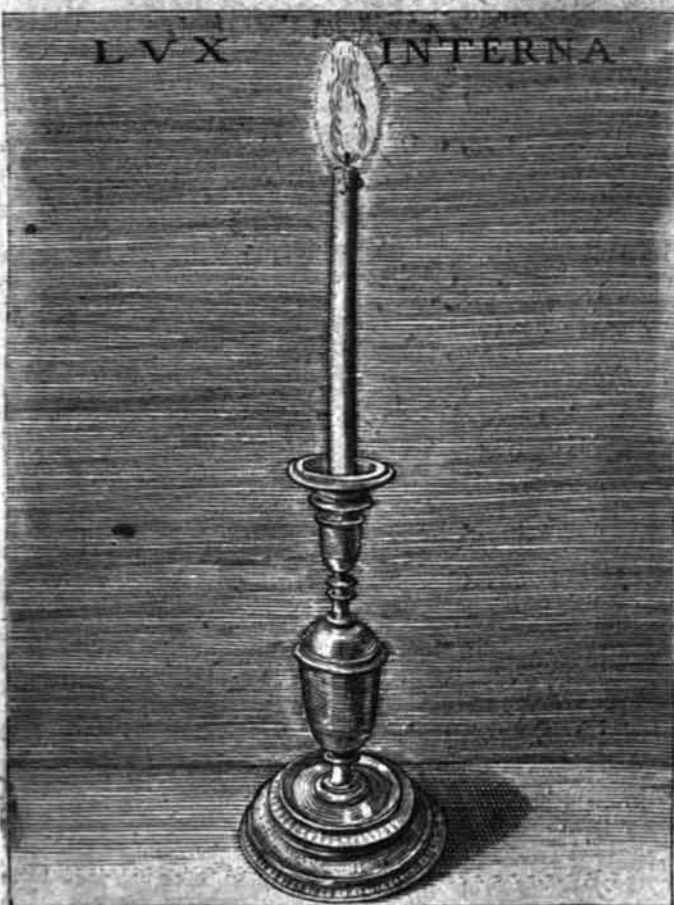
DIUINÆ PRÆDESTINATIONIS signa XII.
totidem symbolis adumbrata.



1. Internò se lucē oblatat. 2. mortem semper cogitat. 3. confessionis et
communione sacramenta frequenter. 4. omniū fortunæ bonis renū-
ciat. 5. adversa cuncta patienter tolerat. 6. ad Dei verbum properat.
7. Egnos benignè inquit. 8. crīi seipsum æstimat. 9. inimicos seriò
amat. 10. commissas noxas non relapsurus deplorat. 11. suā omnem diuinæ
voluntati conformat. 12. affectibus cum ratione concordiam imperat.

SIGNVM I. PRÆDEST. 2

Lucerna pedibus meis, verbum tuum
et lumen semitis meis. Psal. 118.



*Ora brevissimè ac perfectissimè quantum potes:
DEVS semper idem, NOVERIM ME, NOVERIM TE.*

S. Aug. L. 2. soliloq. cap. 1.

THE FIRST SIGN OF PREDESTINATION:

SYMBOL THE FIRST

Is a burning candle, which we designate as an *Internal Light*; as if to say, ‘Thy word is a lantern to my feet and a light to my path’. By this light we may clearly discern the many graces of the Lord, the vanity of the world, the brief span of our life in this world, the stain of sin, and the fleeting shadows of earthly pleasure which – when once we perceive them – cause us ardently to wish to fly to heaven and exclaim with the royal prophet: ‘I thirst for God, the living God; when shall I go to see the face of God?’ (*Psalms* 42) Many there are who ask: who shall show us the good? O God, the light of your countenance is impressed upon us, and we will walk in the glow of that radiant countenance (*Psalms* 4 & 8).

§1

The most bountiful Lord, having drawn the light of reason from His own countenance, has placed this within the better part of ourselves; this we may call our inner guide and instructor. This is the light which not merely separates us from the animals, but also imposes upon us the necessity of approximating to God. This light, impressed on the mind of man, is an eternal exhortation to us not to do unto others what we would not have done unto us, for as we deal with others so are we to expect that they deal with us (*Luke* 6): for which purpose we are neither by main force nor covert means to harm others’ person or good name. By this light we perceive all created things and also God the creator (albeit darkly veiled) in full possession of those things, most perfect, blessed, eternal, abundantly sufficient unto Himself and all things, from beginning to middle and end, dwelling in infinitely remote light, as bountiful as He is rich in works and gifts; who no sooner desires a thing than it is done, who is all mercy and grace, and yet a most holy, severe and incorruptible judge, one above and beyond all flattery; one who is all justice, whose form and magnitude are beyond our powers to admire, whose likeness has never been glimpsed nor can ever yield to the human mind or imagination, to whom all beauty and loveliness are in comparison as mere darkness and despicable shades; yet for this most exquisite beauty nothing engenders greater gratitude than to be beloved of ourselves. This

same light uncovers for us the wonderful works of the Lord, the realm in which night must follow day, the majestic face of Heaven, brilliant with many a starry eye, the numberless transitions of the sun and the moon, the floriferous bosom of the earth, the awesome empire of the seas, the numerous nations of living creatures, the wondrous proliferation of the vegetable world, all proceeding from God without the slightest exertion of His hand, His willing merely that it should be so.

This light of faith and reason also demonstrates that the supreme happiness of man consists in approximating himself as closely as may be to his maker, for that which resembles most closely is the most grateful, and nothing may indeed contribute more to the perfection of an image than close similarity to the pattern from which it was drawn. That is the happiness to which we shall ultimately come, but in another country, another world, in the land of the living. As St John says, 'what we shall be in the future has not yet been revealed. We are well aware that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He really is' (1 *John* 3). This thought, redoubled by a brightly shining light, delivers inconceivable happiness to the soul, and hope raises itself to the greatest height; the affections swell and burst forth towards the Almighty God, for what can be more delightful to a soul than to know itself as the living image of such infinite beauty, and be assured that it is most dear to its resemblance? But this light is not so generous in its rays to every person, which is why King David, who knew well from experience that not all are party to this consolation, was pleased to see this prerogative in himself. As he said, 'Let the light of Your face shine on us. To my heart You are a richer joy' (*Psalms* 4): not in the hearts of others but my own, and of those only who (in sovereign goodness) have been predestined to everlasting life. For this, we walk gladly in the light of Your countenance, and rejoice in Your name all the long day for having been delivered from darkness and made able to understand each day ever more of Your holy will, and united to You by a dearer and firmer bond. 'Israel, blessed we are,' as the prophet says, 'what pleases God has been revealed to us' (*Baruch* 4). And when it appeared to Job that all in Heaven and earth were conspiring against him, he was not a little comforted to reflect upon this light. 'His lamp,' as he says, 'shone over my head, and his light was my guide in the darkness' (*Job* 29). 'You who fear the Lord,' says the Ecclesiastic, 'wait for His mercy' (*Ecclesiasticus* 2). 'Your light will blaze out like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over' (*Isaiah* 58). If, however, you separate yourselves from God, you will be mired in Egyptian shade on all sides, for 'the days of darkness will be many: futility awaits you at the end' (*Ecclesiastes* 11).

§2

The sinners in Hell will talk to one another 'with groans and labouring breath' (*Wisdom* 5); and pray tell what their discourse was, O Holy Spirit, for it is neither vanity nor idle curiosity to wonder what the damned say in Hell, and for us who so desire to know what is done in the Lord's Palace, in the Prince's Court, to know also what is done in Hell; and as we are grateful, so it will profit us, especially as these are no mere passing rumours of the sort current in daily affairs. What then are these discourses of the damned? 'Clearly we have strayed,' they say, 'from the way of truth; the light of justice has not shone for us' (*Wisdom* 5). Clearly we have strayed: if that is the consequence, what is the cause? 'Come,' they say, 'and let us enjoy the good things there are; let us take our fill of precious wine and sweet perfumes, let us not lose the flower of our time, let us garland ourselves with roses before they fade, let no meadow be uncrossed by our righteousness.' What more would we expect from mere cattle or oxen than to invite each other thus into the flowery meadows? This is the cause which they pursue in this world, the effect being prepared in Hell. What pernicious reasoning is this? Where they made their cause they should have added the effect, and when they said 'Come and let us enjoy the good things there are' they ought to have concluded immediately after by saying 'Clearly we have strayed': since we must either do penance in this life or burn for it in the next, this is a place to repent of our sins and not to make no end of sinning; we must think of crosses rather than pleasures, for here we are called to arms and must expect to triumph in another place. Clearly you have strayed: this is a good and true effect, but it comes too late. The light of justice has not shone upon you: and what is that light of justice? If, as the jurists hold, it is justice to accord to each his right, then it is also a part of justice to accord to all things their proper value and worth, so that the light of our soul, by which we make this judgment, may rightly be called the Light of Justice – our understanding, of which the damned so lament their loss. At the savouring of fine wines, the crowning of the head with garlands, the delectation of fine fare and the pursuit of pleasure through agreeable groves, none were so adept as they; but that these pleasures were never to be preferred to eternal ones they wilfully chose to ignore. So addicted were they to their vain and ignominious pastimes that all the blessed joys paled by comparison, and their desire for fine wines, banquets, roses and the delights of the flesh was an insult to heavenly felicity, shunning eternity when set against their liberty of sinning. This was a most unjust estimation of things, however, as the light of understanding manifestly makes clear, teaching us to prize eternity so highly as to despise all other things for its sake alone. Clearly you have strayed – as the event plainly shows – and the light of justice has not shone

for you: there is nothing more certain. There are many who obstinately follow their depraved paths, stubbornly refusing to learn what might set them straight, content to be misled by their wilful ignorance (*Psalms* 35). Such as these were you, O miserable wretches, who now cry and wail, destined everlastingly to sing no other note but this: 'Clearly we have strayed, the light of justice has not shone for us.' This is the psalm of the damned, the woeful dirge they are bound to sing for evermore.

§3

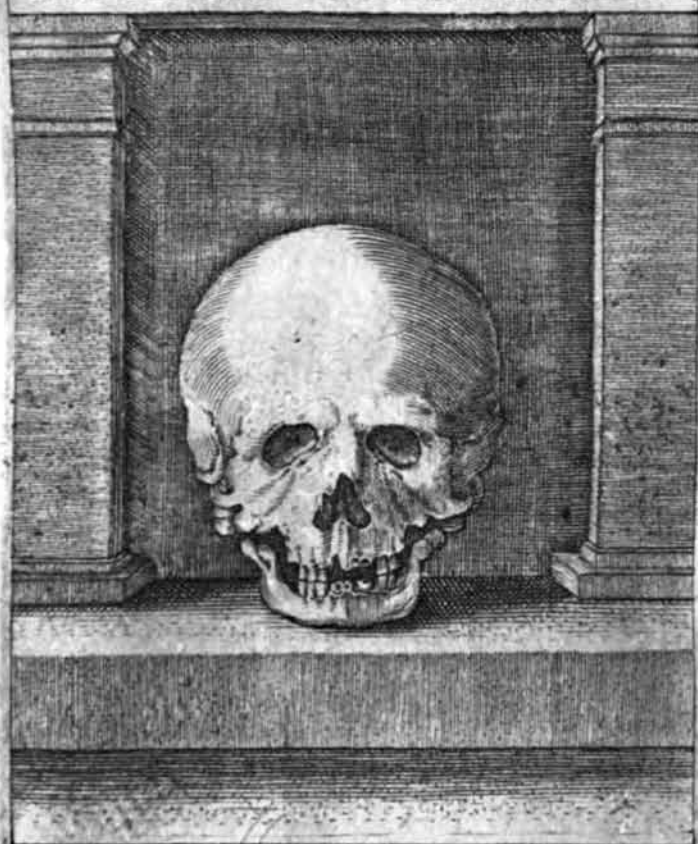
Take heed then, O Christians, that you are not banished from this same heavenly light. 'Pray [...] that the Lord may give us strength and enlighten our eyes' (*Baruch* 1), for the slightest glimpse of this light of understanding will lead us to see clearly that we must not set more store by man than by God; not value riches above conscience, nor prefer human favour to that of the Lord; that no pleasure can be valued above Heaven, nor any fleeting matters above eternal ones. As St John Chrysostom⁴ truly says: He who has once savoured celestial things can find nothing on earth to claim his affections.

This light of understanding shone, by God's will, most plentifully on St Augustine, when being advised, as he says, 'to reflect upon myself, I entered into my inmost soul, and there saw with such an eye as my soul afforded me the unchanging light of God, which when it is known promises eternity, and I saw myself so far removed from You, in an uncouth land' (*Confessions*). Similar to this light of understanding is the light of devotion of which St Bernard speaks: 'Beseech for yourself the light of devotion, a day of brightest sunlight, and a Sabbath day and peace of mind, where like an old soldier privileged with repose after his long service you may pass over all the labours of your life with no labour at all, running with a swelling heart the course of God's commandments; from whence it will happen that everything you once underwent with force and bitterness of mind, you shall afterwards perform with sweetness and consolation' (*Sermon 3: On the Circumcision of the Lord*). Likewise, the Royal Psalmist David invites us to 'make sweet music for your cry of victory' (*Psalms* 33). This is the delectable light of the heart, that flame burning with the very essence of pleasure which God asks us more and more each day to partake of, and in proportion that this light is kindled in our breasts, God, who cannot be augmented and is in every way immense, is yet wondrously increased.

SIGNVM I. PRÆDEST. 21

Coarctatus est mundus, et solus homo
dissolutus et esse cum Christo. ad Philipp. 1.

PROMPTITVDO AD MORTEM.



Mors, minus necessarium est nature iam corruptæ, quæ
non fugienda est sed potius amplectenda, ut iterum fiat
voluntarium, quod futurum est necessarium: offeramus Deo
pro munere quod pro debito tenemur reddere. Greg. in Matth.

II. Præ-

THE SECOND SIGN OF PREDESTINATION: *SYMBOL THE SECOND*

Is a skull or death's head, as it were symbolizing the *ever-neededful preparation of all souls for death*, and declaring: 'I am in doubt between two things, having a desire to be dissolved, and be with Christ.' As the Lord says: 'Be like unto men awaiting the return of their Lord from a nuptial feast, that when he knocks, they will open the door to him.' Then, as St Gregory says: 'It is the Lord who knocks, when by visiting us with some grievous sickness he announces that death is near to hand; then we readily open the door to him and heed his summons with a friendly welcome' (*Homily 13 On the Gospels*). The guilty man who is slow to open the door to his Judge, who dares not escape the prison-house of the body to meet Him, cannot safely behold the countenance of Him who he knows he has unworthily insulted; whereas the man whose hopes and deeds have made him secure will swiftly open the door when the knock comes; he will be glad, and count it an honour that he has been so called, joyous even in the midst of tears at the thought of his reward to come. Why then do we not desire to be dissolved and with Christ (*Philippians* 1) when we see that this is in all ways better than to eke out our time here below in wretched banishment (*Psalms* 119)? It cannot be that he who has lived well should die badly, nor conversely that he who has lived badly should die well. What indeed is this life of ours, the loss of which we so fear, but a scene of mockeries, a sea of miseries where – regardless of the vessel in which we set sail, whether decked with gold, silver and precious stones or mere wood – we cannot avoid the crashing waves, the perilous rocks or the dangerous flats? Happy is he who has crossed this sea, who has safely landed and is in port; for he who happens to die before he is well advanced in years has no more reason to complain than one whose sea-crossing comes to an early end. Why should we fear death when it is but the end of our toil and the beginning of our reward? It is the judgment of the Lord upon all flesh, which none in former ages could avoid, nor ever will in times to come. All must follow, as many as went before, for all are born into this condition and must go where all things are bound to go. Death is the end of all, and to many a remedy; and the wish of all good men, as it is predestined, is for an end of all pains, the furthest boundary beyond which no grief can advance. What madness it is, therefore, to resist this decree of the Lord, to refuse the tribute that is exacted of us all, and to claim an exemption

that is granted to no man. Far superior is that Christian precept which teaches us to make life the subject of our patience and the death of our desires. If we are to believe Solinus⁵, the swan lives bemoaning its sorrowful life, bursting into joyful song only at the moment of death, and so it behoves the elect to do, who are to depart to boundless joy in Heaven. Thus did the octogenarian swan Simeon welcome his own demise, saying: 'Now, Master, you are letting Your servant go in peace' (*Luke 2*). Why should we lament when our poor hut falls into ruins, as if we did not know that when this earthly house, our habitation here below, is dilapidated, God will build for us a better one in Heaven, one which is not made by hand, but everlasting (*2 Corinthians 5*)?

§1

Which person, lying in a hard bed, is not prompt to rise from it? Is it not only they who luxuriate in the softest down who make excuses and put off rising, unwilling to quit their nests? Is your life a harsh one? Then I trust you will not be sorry to pass to a better one. Do you have all you want in life? Then it must be high time to make an end of your span, before your prosperity engulfs you, as it has many another, with some catastrophe at the end. As Tertullian says, we are not to fear that which liberates us from all other fears. The man whom God allows but a short term of life is thereby spared a long torment. This is what caused the holy martyr St Cyprian⁶, when the Emperor Valerian pronounced against him the sentence: 'We command that Cyprian be executed by the sword', to lift his hands and eyes to heaven and answer: 'GOD BE THANKED, who has promised to deliver me from the fetters of my body.' St Ambrose marvelled at those who, at the point of death, preferred to be ejected from the body's prison rather than leave it willingly. What, after all, is there in this world and this life, he asked, but strife, anger, lust and gluttony? St John Chrysostom was of the same mind when he asked: O man, what can you say? You are invited to a kingdom, the kingdom of the Son of God, and are so stupid as to shrug lazily, wondering whether to accept it or not. If for such a reward you were to face a thousand deaths each day, would you not willingly face them? If for no reward you are ready to strive for some earthly principedom, will you not brave a thousand swords, leap into any fire, to become a co-inheritor with the only Son of God? Rather, due to your excessive attachment to your body you mourn your departure from this place, clinging to the poor trappings of this life; but is death such a dreadful thing? Doubtless, the negligence and luxury in which you wallow are the reason for this, for those who live in misery desire nothing more than to be liberated from it. We resemble nothing so much as lazy fledglings, who of their own will would

never fly their nests, yet become ever more helpless the longer they stay in them. This present life is like such a nest, made at best of straw and dust, for when you show me your most splendid palaces and those princely courts shining brightest with burnished gold and precious stones, I shall account them no higher than the swallow's nest, since at the onset of winter they shall ALL fall alike (*Homily on Colossians*).

Just so, O Chrysostom – the golden orator – just so: at the last they shall all fall alike, and we with them, and they are most commonly safest who fall soonest. Thus the wise man shares his good fortune with the just man, given that he was taken before his mind could become infected with malice; whereas the Angel sharply upbraids him who showed a fear of death, saying: 'You are afraid to suffer, and will not depart. What is to be done with you?' He who tarries to a better life has no faith in the Resurrection to come. If our house threatened to fall down around us, would we not flee from it? If our ship, on a stormy sea, were in danger of coming to grief, would we not long for the safety of the port? In this world we hear the cracks of ruination all around, the roaring of storms everywhere, so why do we not seek to gain the safety of our true homeland? There our security is to be found, where our friends expect us, safe in themselves and solicitous of our safety. O happy dead, who die in the Lord and rest in His bosom as if they went to their rest in a delightful slumber (*Revelation* 13). In this way did St Stephen fall asleep in the Lord, even amid a hail of stones and the roar and tumult of those who cast them (*Acts* 7). Jesus Himself affirmed the same of Lazarus, whom He loved so well, saying: 'Our friend Lazarus is at rest' (*John* 11). So Moses, the servant of the Lord, fell asleep at His bidding (*Deuteronomy* 34); and just as a mother kisses her child sleeping in her arms and with embraces sets him down to rest, so there are many who understand Scripture to affirm that God took Lazarus like a sleeping infant in His arms and with tender embraces laid him down to rest in Abraham's bosom as to sleep. When he has laid his beloved to rest (*Psalms* 126), behold his inheritance, for thrice happy are such departed as they, of whom the spirit can say that from this day they rest from their labours: their works follow them (*Revelation* 13) even as servants follow their master, children their parents, noblemen their princes, in attendance upon them unto the very throne of God. They conduct and lead them to the most supreme Court of God, where none under their rank and dignity is admitted. Whoever is predestined to everlasting life, therefore, is to praise death as the most excellent invention in nature, knowing that he may not be admitted in any other way. And the man who is ever ready to die will keep himself so through the following discourses.

§2

Why should I fear dying? It is merely the path trodden by my fathers before me, the path trodden by all, so what special standing may I claim in shunning it? I would rather undertake willingly what I must do in any case. What is willingly volunteered is easier to undertake, for necessity yields to desire in such a pass. Why should I not willingly embrace that which causes the end of my mortal state, which I have so long endured, returning that body which was granted to me only on condition that I return it, thereafter resuming it in greater plenitude? I have been prevented from beholding my God only by the delay of my mortal end, which is but the precursor of a better life. That day which so many fear, as being the last of their life, is but the birth day of life everlasting. It does not disturb me that the light should fade about me here, since I expect a new dawn to come, no more to be darkened by night. How happily I shall embrace that day when I am delivered to my habitation in Paradise, liberated from the bonds which held me for so long here below! I am aware that I stand guilty of much, but your mercy, O my God, is an ocean and a vast sea. Death will just as readily cast me from this earth into that ocean, that sea, as I would myself plunge into the vast bosom of such a sea, making an end of the trials of my mortal life. Would that death made haste: it can never come so precipitately as to find me unprepared; wishing to go to my rest, I will not be sorry when that holy day comes which will bring an end of my afflictions. Rather I will rejoice at the opportunity to shut up the shop of life, burdened with innumerable woes, to shake off the yoke of death and fortune, and begin a day which will never end in night. What glad tidings will be heard when my king calls me forth from the prison where I dwell, placing me in an estate of higher dignity! When its cage is opened, a bird will fly out of its own accord, not needing to be chased: so will I gladly fly out into the azure plains, as one who has long been oppressed by life. I do not fret over the place or hour of my death: let Him who made me do with me as He sees fit. His *will* shall regulate my death as well as my life, and I expect nothing of Him, who is all goodness, but the best. Is it not in the hands of the potter to shape the vessel upon his wheel as it pleases him, as well as mould it anew? I am a vessel made by that Great Potter, so why should I complain if He who made me should deign to unmake me, or make me anew, rendering one who was miserable happy? Is it His will to have me live? Then I shall live as long as it pleases Him. Does He will to have me die? Then I shall not for one moment demur: both my beginning and my ending are His will. I shall embrace not only willingly but happily whatever He shall ordain. 'Life to me, of course, is Christ, but then death would be a positive gain' (*Philippians* 1). I love You, most beloved God, and desire to love You all the more ardently; would that my heart might melt away in the flame of

such a love, for nothing but You can make me happy. When, O LORD, shall I fly to You from this place? I will follow You, O most loving father, and the nearer You summon me, the more readily I will heed Your call.

§3

He who desires to be carried to Heaven and live with Christ has a sense of death which is right and proper; for just as when a physician (according to Theophylact)⁷, seeing a patient's unwillingness to take his prescribed food and medicine, tests it first himself to whet the patient's appetite, so Christ Himself undertook to taste death, so that Christians should have no horror of dying thereafter. Why then, O my Christians, fearful as you may be at the prospect of dying, do you not resolve to do what I have set out for you and, brave of heart, give voice to these exclamations: I will receive the chalice of salvation, and invoke the name of the Lord (*Psalms* 115)? That chalice is undeniably a bitter one, but it is none other than the chalice of which my Saviour drank on the Cross, and left to me in pledge. It is none other than the cup of death which Christ drank of His own free will and which all others must drink, of inescapable necessity, so why should I alone refuse it? All whose lives have a beginning will come to an end, only then to begin a life afresh which will have no end. What vain fear is it, then, that alarms me so? What groundless thoughts lead me astray? Am I not to drink of the chalice which my Father has presented to me, which Christ Himself has drunk for my salvation; am I not a mortal man, and shall I not learn to die? When Alexander the Great lay grievously ill, some of his friends, more concerned than necessary for his well-being, advised him to beware of Philip, his physician, as one who meant to poison him. When the physician next came to him with a potion to administer, Alexander took the potion in one hand, and with the other held out the letter containing the advice of his friends. While preparing to swallow the draught, he stared into the physician's face, looking to see whether he betrayed any signs of guilt in reading the letter; but inferring from his unchanging features that he was innocent, Alexander drank the potion down straight away. When I receive the cup which my only saviour and physician, JESUS, has ordained and presented to me, to summon me to a profound sleep, I will gaze upon my physician while I drink, steadily observing the countenance of my crucified Lord, where I shall read in vivid characters the face of that infinite love He bears me; and I shall drink it down with a faithful and untroubled mind. This will bestow greater goodness the more warmly I welcome it, and so, O my Christians, the advent of death will be the more easily borne if we arm ourselves against the fear of it by due cogitation.

SIGNVM III. PRÆD. 42

Hic est panis de cælo descendens, ut si quis
ex ipso manducauerit, non moriatur. Ioan. 6.

FREQVENS SACRAMENTORVM, CONFESSI-
ONIS ET COMMVNIONIS VSVS.



*Non est audacie ad dominicam mensam sæpe
accedere, sed accedere indignè. Chrys. hom. 5. in
1. epist. ad Tim.*

THE THIRD SIGN OF PREDESTINATION:

SYMBOL THE THIRD

Is the golden pyx of the sacred Eucharist, by which is signified the *frequent observance of the holy sacraments of confession and communion*. It is said of the early Christians that they persevered in the doctrine of the Apostles and the communion of breaking bread (*Acts 2*). It was observed that as this custom grew cold among the Christians of the early Church, so too did their fervour of spirit and fire of charity, with the consequent falling off of all sanctity. It is wondrous how the Devil involves himself here, and what plots the Enemy hatches to divert as many as he can from the frequent observance of the holy Eucharist. What obstacles does he not place in our path, what impediments and barriers does he not contrive to stand in our way? He sows in us the seeds of doubt, which, when we reject them, he uses to persuade us to abstain for reverence's sake; he would have us believe that observance is better for us the less frequently it is undertaken. If that stratagem fails, he then proposes the case of those otherwise good Christians who are not as diligent in this regard as they should be. He speaks of what others will say, what offence they may take; he will pester you with talk of business, fill you with strange notions and stirrings of conscience and set you at odds with others while he fans the flames of hatred and dissent. He renders the mind barren, and voids it of all sense of spiritual things, spreading trouble and unrest, so that nothing seems more irksome than preparation for the sacraments. If this, too, fails, he then musters armies of motley thoughts designed to keep you away from the holy banquet. Then again there are others whom he deceives under I know not what religious pretext, persuading them to put off their observance if not give it up entirely; and thus the malign impostor forges a thousand pretences and tricks to defer from day to day the holy sacrament, piling delay upon delay, adding excuse to excuse, to put off first this day, then the next, and all the while weeks, months and years pass us by without our once repairing to our Lord, unless it is rarely and only then by force or necessity.

§1

'All alike started to make excuses' (*Luke* 14). This one bought a farm, that one cattle, the other took a wife, so that none is at leisure to go to Christ. But these excuses are not as sound as they seem, for what would it cost one of us to leave his farm, his herd or his wife for an hour and apply ourselves to what so closely concerns our salvation? If we were required to till the ground or toil in a vineyard, we might understandably decide to stay sleeping at home rather than go to work. If, however, we are invited to a banquet as the guests of Jesus, where the fare is to be none other than Jesus Himself, and yet we make excuses and refuse to go, this denotes either madness or impudence. We would justly seem the children of Adam if we avoided the gaze of the wrathful Lord (*Genesis* 3); but to avoid Him when with such mercy and grace He beholds us, when He lovingly summons us to His table, richly supplied with all heavenly delights, is the mark of beasts not men. In order to put the best gloss on our excuses, however, we claim nothing dishonest or as unworthy as theft, adultery and the like, but instead justify our excuses and indifference with as innocent a pretence as we can. What harm is there in marriage, you say, and attention to domestic affairs, or in buying cattle or land? But what good is there in them, I say, when they divert us from the most sovereign good of all: our soul's salvation? We are to take care of our body while not harming our soul, and work our land while never losing sight of Heaven. When we are invited to this great feast, we must go straight away, having no care of other things, not thinking of our farm, cattle, or wife. No other business ought to distract us when we are discoursing with the King of Angels at this royal banquet, but on so many occasions we are shameless enough to say: 'I cannot come,' which is the same as saying: 'I will not come.' O my Christians, is it thus that you seek the favour of God? Miserable as we are, and harmful to none more than our own selves, this is nothing but running from the fire when we are frozen with cold, insulting our physician when all unawares we lie dangerously ill and in all the greater need of his help, and despising the sweetest manna while we hunger for garlic and onions. Through Moses, God instructed the people that they should gather manna on every day except the Sabbath, when they were to take their rest (*Exodus* 16). This holy sacrament is our manna, infinitely more excellent than theirs, of which we are to take our fill during our span of life, until the Sabbath of death invites us to our rest. Instead, what do we do but imitate our first parent Adam, who, as Gerson⁸ attests, would not eat of the tree of life while he could, and was afterwards justly punished by being forbidden to eat of it when he wished to? So wilful are we also that we will not approach this holy supper while we can, and while we gladly accept invitations to others' tables, we never go to that of our Lord save rarely and then against our will. We are neglectful of

nothing quite so much as our own salvation; we are careless there, but vigilant in all other ways. It is for this reason that God sends us to learn from the ant: 'Idler, go to the ant; ponder her ways and grow wise' (*Proverbs* 6). The natural instinct of the ant tells it that winter is not the season to gather food, so it collects provisions in summer and hoards them till that time. How much more diligent we should be than the ant, for our Lord commends the food of immortality to us, affirming that: 'If any shall eat of this bread, he shall have eternal life.' Those, therefore, who are destined for eternal life never cease gathering this vital food before the winter of death. This was the intention of Him who bequeathed the sacrament to us, not only to be adored but also to nourish us; and as we maintain our body's health through the daily provision of food, when we would otherwise be consumed by the heat within ourselves, so the soul is kept safe by frequent recourse to this holy food, when otherwise it would be consumed by the impure flames of concupiscence. Thus it is that St Innocent⁹ admonishes us not to put off for too long the reception of this sacrament, lest we incur the danger of spiritual death. Similarly St Hilarion¹⁰ says that it is to be feared that those who take too long a leave from the body of Christ will be estranged from their salvation. A man abstaining from sin does not refrain from communion; but that common desire of ours is also an impediment, for we would sooner choose to abstain from holy communion than from sinning, and sooner absent ourselves from the holy table than our lewdness. Even by this means, which God invented as the sweetest and most efficacious of all, we cannot be persuaded to correct our ways and amend our lives. We believed the deceitful serpent when it assured us that we could become like God, yet we scarcely credit Jesus Christ when He assures us that by eating this flesh and drinking this blood we shall be changed into Him (*John* 6). Our saviour Christ commends this sacrament to us in memory of His death, and none could doubt that He commends frequent observance; yet while we approve of His injunction as just, we transgress it through our slowness in observing. All the Holy Fathers recommend frequenting the sacred table, and we heed their advice, but our bad habits still prevail. The examples of many holy men shine brightly before us: we see them, but do not follow.

§2

If whenever a man received the Eucharist his earthly estate were vastly enriched, there would be scarcely any need to persuade others to attend, so obvious would the golden motive be. Indeed it would be needful rather to find ways of keeping the multitudes away, than contrive reasons for them to attend. Wretched blindness of mankind! We see gold and are captivated by it, while scorning the treasures of

the Eucharist because we do not take them into account. What is all the gold in the world but a handful of dust, when set against this incomparable jewel whose value no living thing can know? The Eucharist has the power to wash away venial sins and protect us from mortal ones; it weakens the sinful propensities of the mind, illuminates our understanding, strengthens our resolve, soothes our conscience, arms us against the Enemy, girds us against adversity, defends us from failure and confirms us in the path of righteousness. The Eucharist gives us a pledge of future glory, simultaneously inspiring a contempt for death and a desire for Heaven, a moderation in our passions, a horror of sin, a love of virtue, a victory over ourselves and a perseverance in the good.

Perhaps you will say: my soul is barren, vain, frigid and defiled, so I shall not go. This excuse is either malign or no excuse at all, because the more of these imperfections you discover in yourself, the more imperative it is that you attend the Eucharist. Is your soul defiled? Then hasten to the Eucharist, which is the fountain of purity. Are you sick? You will find it a sovereign remedy and a proven antidote against all the ills of the mind. Are you hungry? It is the bread of angels. Are you frozen with cold? Hurry to it as to a burning fire. Are you attacked by your enemies? Take heart; it is an arsenal of all manner of weapons. Are you afflicted with sorrow? It is the wine which cheers the heart of man. Do you seek delicacies? They are nowhere to be found but here in this banquet, the feast of kings. Do you yearn for Heaven? Here your dues are lessened, and you will be far better provisioned than Elijah on the road to Mount Horeb. If the very touch of Christ's garment can staunch the flowing of blood, what possible disease is there which the touch of His body could not cure? But I am unworthy, you say, and too often approach this sacred feast unable to accept it with sufficient reverence. For His sake, O Christians, let us not confuse our lack of reverence with sloth. As the Angelic Doctor St Thomas Aquinas says, it is 'better to attend the Eucharist with love than avoid it from fear' (*Summa Theol.* III, q. 80, 10–3). St Ambrose interpreted the words of the Lord thus: 'If it is our daily bread, why wait a year before you receive it; why not receive daily that which is of profit daily? You may worthily receive it every day, for one who is unworthy to receive it every day is also unworthy to receive it every year' (*De sacramentis*, V, 4). And as he says elsewhere, if Christ's blood is shed, whenever it is shed, for the remission of sin, I should be in constant receipt of it, so that my sins are remitted constantly, for I, who sin constantly, stand in need of constant remission. As Gennadius of Marseille¹¹ advises: 'I neither praise nor condemn the practice of daily communion, but I would earnestly counsel everyone to attend on the Lord's Day' (*De Ecclesiasticis Dogmatibus*, 53), always provided that we go intending never to sin more, for that preparation is more easily achieved than ridding our mind of sinful desires. Our intention must be never again to offend

God, for a man would show great ingratitude towards his maker if he did not at least wish never again to stain his soul with sin. Of this sort of person the Master of the Banquet justly stated: 'I say unto you that none of those men shall taste of my supper.' But O Lord, are these not the very men who themselves refused Your supper, for whose offence You decree punishment? For what they desire is their own torment, and what wickedness they gladly embrace is nothing but their own punishment. When Samaria was in the grip of a terrible famine, the prophet Elisha foretold that the people would soon see a steep fall in the price of corn. One of the satraps mockingly said that 'even if the clouds were pregnant with corn and rained it down on us, it would still never sell at so miserable a price.' Elisha answered him thus: 'You shall see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat of it.' This is indeed the punishment of many in our times, that they see this heavenly bread, but do not taste of it. O most lukewarm Christians, you see this sacred bread elevated at Holy Mass, yet will not taste of it; you see it carried in the streets for the relief of the sick, yet will not taste of it; you see this holy fare at communion in every church that you visit, yet will not taste of it. You are excluded from this table only because you exclude yourselves from it.

§3

When the Predestined are deprived for any length of time of this bread of life, they interpret it, as true sons of God, as a sign of their Father's anger. Far be it from them to neglect any opportunity to receive it, for they are not unaware of the great and benign providence with which God has supplied for each and every creature its proper food. The eagle preys on lesser birds, the whale on smaller fish, the lion on other wild beasts, horses and other domestic livestock on oats and hay, sheep on grass; as for man, the bread of the earth is ordained for those who aspire no higher than to be sons of men, but for those who aspire to become sons of God, the bread of Heaven is their principal nourishment; this celestial bread, this bread of the sons of God, this bread of angels. With burning desire, humble affection and tender reverence they receive it frequently, piously electing to incur presumption by seeming like children rather than foes. It is during this feast that Jesus speaks to the predestined, in this manner: 'Consider what I have suffered for you; count the thorns which pierced my head, but never will you be able to count the torments I have undergone for you in every other part of me. My body was torn by whips and nails, but the suffering of my heart is beyond all telling. It was little less than another death I suffered in the garden, when the anguish of my heart drew as much blood as later did the soldiers in their flagellation. Consider what my enemies inflicted on me, when even my

best friends did not spare me; you know on what hard bed I gave up my spirit for your sake; my love – which is just as ardent as ever you may know – sought the form of the most bitter and humiliating death of all, and finding the cross to be the most bitter and humiliating, chose it. Behold how I have died for you, and have been ready to die a thousand times for you. What then will you be ready to suffer for me, if you wish my love for you to be everlasting? You must love me, who have so loved you. For I have loved you even to the point of death, even to the cross, and it remains for you to judge how far your love will reach for me.' Who among that happy congregation will not tearfully answer him in this way? 'It will reach to the death, most loving Lord, to the Cross itself, for it is Your divine pleasure that my love should reach so far. Who shall grant me the happiness to die for You, O sweetest JESUS? Who am I, that I should be thought worthy to die for You? What love did You have for my own life, that You would suffer, that You would die for me, regardless of my merits or flaws?' Such sighs as these, such virtuous aspirations are the common currency of conversation at this holy banquet, and thus a soul becomes intimately acquainted with the Lord.

This is why we include frequent communion among the principal signs of predestination, provided at least that our intentions are honest, even if not as ardent as we might wish. But alas there are many Christians who, hearing however many sermons or reading however many books, remain so deadly sunk in their debauched lives that neither the example of their more pious peers nor the admonitions of the saints can provoke them to a more frequent recourse to this holy sacrament.

O Christians, what blocks of ice, what fatal chills have gripped your hearts, that you shun the consoling beams of this sun? Can you not see that these are the ploys of the Enemy, all of whose efforts are to extinguish in us the fire of this most divine love, so that all are frozen in a coldness of spirit, living as if we were dead, perishing in the mire of sin, never arriving at the kingdom of life? Those, however, who love Christ desire nothing more than to go to Him often, for as Cassiodorus¹² so justly says: 'It is an unheard-of affection that one should love his friend and yet not delight in his company.'

SIGNVM IV: PRÆD. 68

Qua nūc... hanc arbitratu...
propter Christum detrimenta. ad Philipp. 3.

RENVNCIATIO OMNIVM



Gaudes quia res tuas inuenisti, non es tristis
quia te perdidisti. S. August. in Psal. 91.

Pauper-

THE FOURTH SIGN OF PREDESTINATION: *SYMBOL THE FOURTH*

Is a bare altar, denuded of decoration, which signifies the *renunciation of all possessions*. Our Saviour proclaims: 'None of you can be my disciple, without giving up all that he owns' (*Luke 14*). He commands us to relinquish all, to give up everything we have, and anyone with Christian blood in his veins will make this resolution. I would sooner be a pauper than the enemy of GOD, and I would rather be deprived of all other things than His divine grace.

Poverty has created many merchants, not of aromatic spices or fine draperies, but of Heaven. As Christ says: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it' (*Matthew 13*). A merchant of this kind never believes that he has harmed himself by selling his stock, which on the contrary he takes to be immeasurably enhanced by the addition of such a choice jewel. He receives a bill of exchange from Christ upon delivery of those small commodities, the payment of which makes him joyful beyond words. He has the whole Kingdom of Heaven mortgaged to him upon the payment of a small sum of gold, and buys himself a vast estate, not only by yielding a few acres of land, but also by virtue of his state of mind in thus yielding them. As St John Chrysostom says, the owner of such a pearl knows what a rich man he is, even though the pearl is hidden away in a place which nobody else knows. We are made in this world to be busy, not to fritter our time away in idleness, and there is nobody in the world so destitute that he is not able to advance his fortune with this merchandise, for as St Augustine says, God requires only ourselves, and cares not for us in regard merely of what we possess; neither is there anybody so steeped in riches who could rightly wish to take them with him rather than this priceless jewel (*Sermons 13: On Matthew*). Yet this is a negotiation which, rather than extracting our dues from us at the moment when that should be necessary, and depriving us of our substance, brings us to this resolution: sooner to spare our souls than our money when the need arises, and sooner to become a beggar than an enemy of God. It more behoves us to be prodigal of our money in order to save our souls – either by freely giving it or bearing its loss patiently – than to be prodigal of our souls in order to save our money. This we affirm to be a sign of predestination, clear not only by Christian faith but also by reason.

§1

Stilpo of Megara¹³, having lost his country, his wife and family, and escaping from public ruin with his life alone, was asked by Demetrius¹⁴ whether or not he had lost all he had. In reply he said he had lost nothing at all, for 'I carry with me all the goods I possess.' So too Bias of Priene,¹⁵ suffering a similar misfortune, affirmed of himself that he carried his worth not on his shoulders but in his breast, not where men's eyes could see it, but where their minds could judge it. This inner worth, which was esteemed even by the idolaters, is among Christians a sure sign of *predestination* to everlasting life. He is a brave soldier of Christ indeed, who after a great loss is able to say: 'I bear all my riches with me, my God is all.'

It is said of that holy man St Francis of Assisi that he spent whole nights on end considering and repeating with delight those short words: 'My God is all.' This is an example to us all: we should emulate the saint and glory with him in our needs by saying: '*My God is all*.' Let others seek what they will, let them be taken and pleased by what they will, I seek God alone; God is my only desire, my only delight: *my God is all*! I leave to others all claims to honour and all pleasures; let me have God, and I have everything. I yield whole worlds to others, and do not envy them their mountains of gold and precious stones; I care not for their exquisite delights, for my God to me is all. There is nothing so good, beautiful or pleasing which the most supreme good does not infinitely surpass in point of goodness, beauty or pleasure: *my God is all*. How many desires come to inflame me! In what fires do I burn, by what cupidity am I engulfed! Like the mad youth in the gospel (*Matthew* 17), I am dragged sometimes into water, sometimes into fire, but what are these things which I pursue so impetuously but vanities, passing fancies and infamies of the kind which never last long; they either die to their possessor, or he to them. My God, my love and my all, what can I possibly want which You cannot fully give? Are You not all to me: my food, drink, rest, joy and pleasure, the height of all my honour? O God, You are all, and more than all, to me. Although I feed on that fare which most takes my fancy, quench my thirst with the drink I like most and relish the pleasure which most delights me, what really are these things to me? *My God is all*. One who is refreshed by You, takes pleasure in You, is indeed refreshed and delighted by the supreme good. Meanwhile, labours oppress us, grief afflicts, cares distract, our riches dwindle, our friends abandon us, our lives are idled away and we are used roughly by others. 'I do not place any value on my own life,' says St Paul (*Acts* 20). None of these things can make me pitiable, even though they rush to overwhelm me, if God the sovereign good has me in His care: my God is all. You are goodness itself to me, O my good God; the repose to my toil, happiness to my grief, security to my cares and the only true riches to my poverty. You are my

shield against the furious assaults of men, my safe haven from whatever ills afflict me, and You are everything to me that I could desire. All abundance which is not God is mere beggary to me. Why then do we slake our thirst in impure streams when we have so limpid a fountain as this from which to drink? In having God we have all that we may desire. If poverty afflicts anyone, if fortune tempers his joy, his grief will then diminish; fortune can challenge nothing of him that is truly his own, neither can death bereave him of anything that is another man's.

§2

The pauper does not yield in happiness to him who, although rich in possessions, is never content because his riches are in his coffers, not his heart; he would never pine with sorrow if he lost it all, for as St Gregory says, we lose without grief what we possessed without pleasure, and only sigh when we lose something we dearly loved. But the possessor of that true good can neither be given it nor deprived of it against his will. Go then, Satan, and conjure up a messenger: the family of most patient Job is not yet so extinct that none remain who are ready to relinquish all they have. Run therefore, and shout as loud as you can, saying: 'You have lost all you had, you are utterly ruined.' See what reply you receive: 'If I had not lost it, it might have been the ruin of me, but now I am the freer to hasten to Heaven. In liberating me from a precious but perilous burden, GOD has ensured my security, so that I will not call anything a loss which GOD intended as a boon. Furthermore, why should I pointlessly afflict myself with it? I knew when I possessed it that I would one day have to renounce it, and I am more my own self when I can say that I own it no more.' O Christian, do you heed this, and do you also heed it, O hound of hell? That is what those who are predestined to Heaven have to say of their riches. They can never lose so much as to lose the freedom to say: It is no loss we sustain, but a beneficial gain, whereby for a modest outlay we purchase inestimable wealth; we buy Heaven in exchange for a small parcel of land here below.

SIGNVM IV^{to} PRÆD. 81

Beati qui nunc fletis, quia ridebitis. Luc. 6.

TRIBVLATIO PERPETVA
CVM PATIENTIA



*Quos presentis vitæ labore Deus atterit, hos in aduentu
iudicis à verberè abscondit; ut tanto tunc ad salutem
certiores exhibeat, quanto nunc eos flagella diuini secant.*

Gregor. I. 6. moral. c. 15

FIFTH SIGN OF PREDESTINATION: *SYMBOL THE FIFTH*

Is a thorny rose bush, which signifies *patience in the midst of long affliction*. Abraham's admonition of the rich glutton amid the flames ran thus: 'My son, recall how you were well treated during your lifetime, while Lazarus was ill treated: now you are in torment while Lazarus rejoices.' By GOD's judgment the courses of destiny vary; we are either to suffer in this life or in the next, of which we have no knowledge. We must therefore make a choice of one or the other, for this is a duty we cannot avoid. As St John Chrysostom says: 'If you see anyone given to virtue who is yet sorely afflicted, you must count him fortunate, because while he suffers in this life for the sins he has committed, he has a reward awaiting him in the next' (*Oration 3: On Lazarus*).

It is impossible for anyone who takes up arms against the iniquities of the age not to be persecuted. It ill behoves the champion of God to steep himself in pleasures; those who enlist do not do so with overfed stomachs, and what are these trials but arenas of warfare, combat, hardship and dire necessity? There is a time assigned for our repose, but here below we must expect nothing but turmoil and adversity. There is nobody who, armed and ready for battle, expects comfort: why did you enlist if that was your expectation? Why did you prepare to wage war against corrupt nature and concupiscence? Nor must it grieve you that others live in peace while you are assailed by temptation, for that would be to accuse of imprudence the Apostle James, who exhorts: 'My brothers, consider it a great joy when trials of many kinds come upon you' (*James 1*). There is no man so unfortunate as he who has never experienced adversity, for that is a sign that God has condemned him as feeble and unworthy of the good fight (*Seneca, De Providentia*). The war against adversity deserves to take place in the amphitheatre of honour. It is therefore a sure sign of our future blessedness that we can rejoice in our suffering, and even as we are surrounded by evils, lift up our hearts to Heaven while tears course down our cheeks. Jesus well knew that we were rich in suffering, and that our only true joy would be the hope of our recompense to come. He enjoins us to REJOICE AND EXULT, as if we were already blessed (*Matthew 5*). Conversely, however, how often do we lament and afflict ourselves? How often do we childishly moan and flinch from every blow? We seem not to be aware that it is the fatherly and health-giving

hand of God which touches us, and there is no child who does not know that the incisions made by surgeons are done to cure us, and are the first stage in our recovery. In this manner, God only wounds us in order to cure us and hasten our recovery, not to shorten our lives. If you suffer anything for the sake of justice, as St Peter says, it is a particular grace for you to endure trials for the conscience of God, otherwise what is the point of suffering injuries when you go awry? If you do well by enduring them patiently, you will enjoy God's grace (1 *Peter* 3). As St Gregory says in similar vein, it is often the case that the elect, who are set on the path to eternal felicity, are subjected in this life to endless adversities, being universally despised and deemed undeserving of any worldly favour. All the while, however, their virtues shine brightly in the eyes of their hidden Judge, and in the merits of their lives; they scorn contempt and shun honours; they regulate their bodies' desires, while in their souls their love grows; they accustom themselves to patience, and rejoice with hearts uplifted whenever they suffer injuries for the sake of justice.

§1

It is not the usual way of eternal providence to nourish a virtuous person with delicacies; instead it tests, hardens and prepares him for its particular ends. All the while it promises that: 'Should you pass through the waters, I shall be with you; or through rivers, they will not swallow you up. Should you walk through fire, you will not suffer, and the flame will not burn you' (*Isaiah* 43). It is God's way to steep us in both water and fire, never allowing us either to drown or burn; He tests us both in freezing cold and scorching heat, but the Predestined shall be permitted neither to be frozen nor burnt. God is faithful, and will not allow you to be tried beyond your capacity, instead enabling you to profit from those trials which you are able to withstand (1 *Corinthians* 10).

Ludovicus Blosius¹⁶ writes with particular astuteness about this symbol of predestination, when he states that there is no more reliable sign of divine election than when a man for the sake of God undergoes affliction or adversity not only without repugnance, but with patience and submission, since nothing can profit him more than *affliction* (*Institutio Spiritualis*, VIII). This is the priceless jewel in the ring with which God espouses a pious soul, whose duty is solidly affirmed by St John Chrysostom thus: 'Nothing is better than to suffer evil for God' (*Homily VIII*: Ephesians 4). The elect may well be said to drink of the torrents in their path, for which their heads shall be exalted unto Heaven (*Psalms* 109). They are crushed and trodden underfoot, so that like palm trees they may then rise all the higher. It is a truth which God would have us explore, that the good we

aspire to is infinite and difficult of access, not to be attained save by hardship and toil. This is in accordance with what Mark the Anchorite¹⁷ said: knowing our stupidity, God does not bestow a particular favour on anyone whom He has not first made ready to receive it by means of some fitting calamity. No sooner had Moses taken leave of the pharaoh's court by God's command, than he was assailed by poverty, ignominy, and mortal danger through the king's contempt; his flight and exile all conspired to bring about his downfall. As St Gregory says, we may discern those whom God has elected by their pious deeds and bitter sufferings. We may also gather just how rigorously our Judge will punish the malefactor at his last end, while He deals so severely in this life with those whom He loves the most. You err, O my Christians, if you imagine that you will ascend whole and unbruised to Heaven. Look around, and you will see that the richer men are in virtues, the more they are freighted with woes; and that those who enjoy the greatest opulence and are favoured by fortune are also the most advanced in wickedness. We see the beasts which are destined for the slaughterhouse grazing freely in the best pastures, while others are worn out with toil. The same is true of those who are predestined to Heaven, not permitted to enjoy themselves freely but burdened with afflictions, as Lodovicus Blosius affirms from the authority of another great man: *'When God decrees that a person should be elevated to a high degree of perfection, and have bestowed upon him his richest favours, he does not immerse lightly, but plunges him headlong into a sea of bitterness.'*

§2

The doctrine of Galen and Hippocrates is to cosset and cherish the self, while the doctrine of Christ is to hate and efface the self. All those who have attained Heaven bear witness to the saying of Themistocles:¹⁸ 'We would have been lost had we not perished.' Many have been saved by perishing in this way, and as many would have been unhappily lost if God – by ensuring a happy loss – had not prevented it. When others imagined St Paul to be lost, he began to see that in fact he had been found: 'I am glad of weaknesses, insults, constraints, persecutions and distress for Christ's sake. For it is when I am weak that I am strong' (2 *Corinthians* 12). As if he were growing weary of seeking out God, St Bernard writes: 'O Lord, I may circumnavigate Heaven and earth, the sea and the dry land, and find You nowhere but on the Cross, for there You sleep and there You feed, where You take Your rest at noon-time.' Let us therefore follow the Lord, avoiding eternal torments by means of brief sufferings here. When Athanasius¹⁹ was sent into exile by Julian the Apostate²⁰ and saw the Christians of Alexandria weeping at his departure, he told them: 'Be of good cheer, for this is but a mere cloud which will

soon blow over, and indeed all that seems most terrible in this life is but a cloud, soon to evaporate into everlasting serenity' (in Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V, 14).²¹ The ancients saw Apelles²² the artist as so industrious because not a day went by without his drawing a line: in the same way, Christians who would live the best life should welcome such clouds each day so that they might suffer them for the Lord's sake. The heavens appeared to Job not merely cloudy but as unyielding as iron, and yet as Tertullian relates, he resisted the Enemy with as many varieties of patience as the calamities which befell him; so that neither the vulnerability of his person to the Enemy, nor the plunging of his children into universal ruin, nor indeed the subsequent infirmities of his body could deflect him from his patience (*De Patientia*, XIII). What a paragon God made of him, to the shame of his Enemy! What a glorious standard did God, in him, raise aloft! At each of his heavy losses, he responded by saying only: 'GOD BE THANKED.' God rejoiced at this, and the Devil was confounded. Thus Job deserved everything to be doubly restored to him, and so we may say that by suffering we make great strides towards our celestial homeland.

§3

Many and various are the ways which lead to Heaven, but there is none more certain than the royal road, the *Cross*. 'We must all experience many hardships before we enter the Kingdom of GOD' (*Acts* 14). Just as the furnace hardens the potter's vessels, so are just men tried by adversity; but we are to know that whereas straw is burnt in the furnace, gold is purified, and while the one turns to ashes, the other is burnished (*Ecclesiasticus* 27). This furnace is the world, in which the just are gold, the fire is tribulation, and the goldsmith is GOD. If gold had sense and the power of speech, it would undoubtedly say: let the craftsman do with me as he sees fit, I will endure to be placed wherever he would place me; and let the straw burn with intent to consume me. It will go up in smoke, while I emerge the more refined (Augustine, *Exposition on Psalm* 60). Behold well, all you who are straw and all who are gold, for in that same fire where straw burns away to nothing, gold shines the brighter. The wicked man blasphemes and accuses GOD of sending the same affliction for which the patient man praises Him. Patient men grow in strength in the midst of adversities, just as fires grow greater the more the wind blows, and gain strength from that which threatens to extinguish them. Count up all who have been friends of GOD since the beginning of the world, and you will find that all are marked with this sign of *Predestination*. 'GOD [...] proved them worthy to be with Him' (*Wisdom* 3). Abraham was variously afflicted and perplexed, Joseph sold by his brothers,

David most vilely persecuted by his son, Isaias sawn in half, Ezechias' brains were dashed out on rocks, Jeremiah was stoned to death, Micheas put to death by the sword, Amos had a nail driven into his temples, Daniel was thrown to the lions, Naboth buried under a pile of stones, Elisha mocked, Job so ulcerous that he was spat on, Tobit was blinded, the innocent Susanna condemned – and these are only a small number. Moreover, what afflictions did St Paul not suffer? The remaining Apostles were themselves scourged, crucified and put to death in sundry ways. Indeed, GOD spares none of those whom He loves. 'The Lord chastises every son He accepts' (*Hebrews* 12). All who desire to live piously in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution (2 *Timothy* 3).

§4

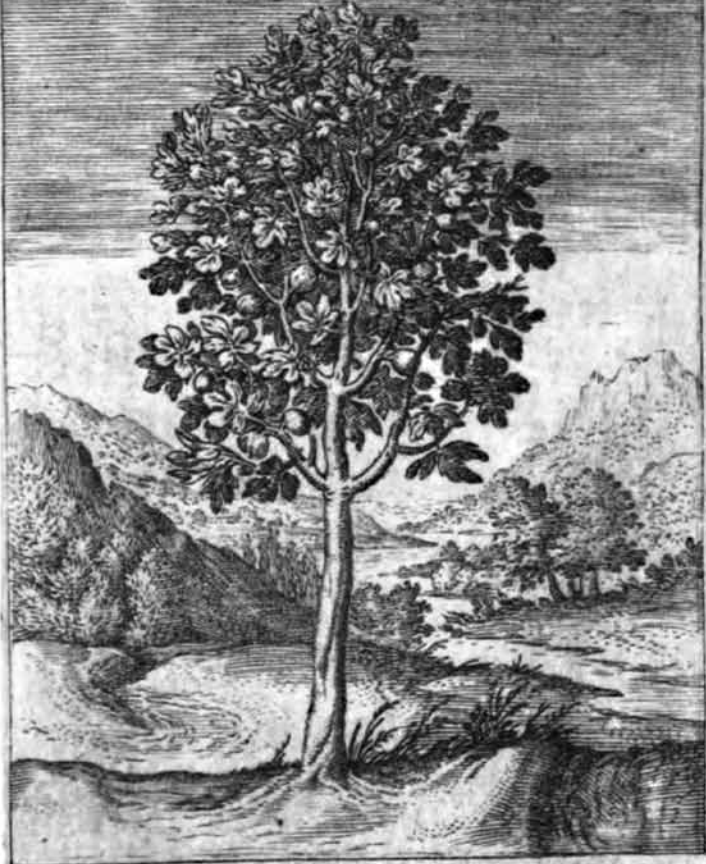
Let every servant of Yours, O GOD, be therefore assured that if he passes the probation of this life, he shall be crowned for it in the next; for You send tranquillity after tempests, and consolation after weeping (*Tobias* 3). Happy is he whom God rebukes (*Job* 7); for if we undergo anything for His sake, we shall ultimately reign with Him (2 *Timothy* 2). Let no man fear the scourge, therefore, but rather fear disinheritance, for by that scourging we are made ready for our eternal inheritance. Let us not relish overmuch the pleasures which come our way on the path, lest we forget those we wish for in our eternal homeland. As St Augustine says, if you are exempted from the scourge, you are also excluded from among the sons of God. Never, therefore, be so senseless or childish as to say: my Father loves my brother more than me, for while He allows him to do as he pleases, I am punished if I even so much as act against His wishes. You are favoured by that punishment, for it shows that His inheritance is reserved for you, while those who are spared for the time being can ultimately expect an eternity of damnation (cf. St Gregory, *Commentary on Job*, V). Those who run headlong to their destruction through the prosperities of this life are like men led to incarceration through pleasant fields. It may be observed that the rose never smells so sweet as when it is planted near garlic. The Celestial Gardener, too, has for His most fragrant roses those whom He has predestined to Heaven. These He arranges in such a way that they are distressed by the proximity of noxious weeds, for whom they nurture great antipathy; because the more virtuous a man is the more he will be scorned by the wicked and vulnerable to affliction. These roses are the more sweet-smelling by virtue of their malodorous neighbours. It is also the case that roses which are cultivated to grow without thorns have no scent; so too the aroma of virtue – especially patience – evaporates in the absence of adversity. No man can know how much he profits, save by affliction,

and neither can he know himself except through the awareness of misery; for just as the stars which shine at night are hidden by day, so true virtue, which rarely shines in prosperity, shines the brightest in adversity. The Lord of Heaven is never so delighted with the glorious deeds of His servants as when they suffer their trials and tribulations cheerfully and confidently. The eagle exposes its young directly to the sun, the silversmith tries the strength of his metal, and Christ subjects His servants to afflictions. We may therefore say with even more reason than the Romans: *'To do and to suffer difficult things most behoves the Christians.'* The path where the head leads the way is that which it best behoves the limbs to follow.

SIGNVM VI^{tae} PRÆD. 102

Audiens sapiens, sapientior erit. *Proverb. 15.*

AVDITIO VERBI DEI



*Qui dedignatur esse discipulus hominum, euadet
magister errorum. S. Greg. L. 1. Dial. capit. 1.*

SIXTH SIGN OF PREDESTINATION: *SYMBOL THE SIXTH*

Is a fig tree, which is not only mentioned often by Christ in His sermons, but which also paid such faithful heed to the divine word that when commanded to shed its leaves and wither away, it readily obeyed. It therefore symbolizes the injunction to ‘*Hear the word of God*.’ Is there not a clear illustration of this sign of Predestination in the words of Christ Himself? ‘Whoever comes from GOD listens to the words of GOD’ (*John* 8). St Ambrose puts it well when he asks how the word of God can be properly savoured on a palate which has been defiled by the gall of wickedness (*Explanatio Psalmorum*). That which we hear freely, we act upon easily (St Isidore, *Synonima*)²³, and the only faithful hearers of the divine word are those mentioned by our Saviour: ‘Blessed are they who hear the word of GOD, and keep it.’ Those who do not keep it in their lives, but keep it only in their memories do so in vain; there are some who, having once heard the word, are careful not to forget it, but who nonetheless do not correct their lives accordingly (Augustine, *Exposition on Psalm 118*). Meanwhile, the minds of the Predestined yearn for divine and sacred things, and setting aside all business and interrupting their sports, they would sooner hear the word of God than attend to their bodies’ sustenance, and repair to church above all other things. Foul weather does not deter them, nor fair weather distract them. They prefer to pass their time in the closed vaults of the church, rather than the open fields, and while they are ever eager to hear, they can never have their fill of hearing. A good ear hears wisdom with all eagerness (*Ecclesiasticus* 3) and where is this more certain to be found than in the word of God? As St Bernard says, the soul seeks that Word by consenting to which it is improved, by whose illumination it is instructed, by whose support it is made virtuous, by whose re-formation it becomes wise: in conforming to it the soul finds its principal ornament, in enjoying it, its chief happiness (*Sermon 85, On the Song of Songs*). How often does a soul nourished with this fare exclaim, with the prophet Jeremiah: ‘When Your words came, I devoured them; Your word was my delight and the joy of my heart’ (*Jeremiah* 14)! For as St John Chrysostom testifies, just as it is the sign of a healthy body to feel hunger, so it is the sign of a healthy soul to hunger for the word of God (*Homily XIV: Genesis*).

§1

Who would not admit that it is a sick soul which does not listen to truth, while indulging all manner of frivolities? The vices which such a person hears condemned in church are then committed frequently by him at home! Ignoring pious exhortations, such a one devotes himself to drinking or gambling, or else wastes his time hunting or hawking, or indeed wallowing in his feather bed while the preacher condemns vice from the pulpit. Drowsy and languid as a dormouse, he is not ashamed to be taken at noon-day and buried in his downy sepulchre! It is a shame to write this about Christians, but a greater shame that Christians should behave in this way. These are the signs of men in dire straits, so different from those which mark out the Predestined. 'Now it happened,' says St Luke, 'that He was standing one day by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round Him listening to the word of God' (*Luke* 5). Such was their holy hunger that neither the synagogues nor the temple, nor even the spacious walls of the city itself could contain them; they thronged into the open fields as the only place capable of holding such a teeming multitude. In order to follow and hear Him, not one single man or woman had any difficulty travelling where they had to, however solitary the place may be. We, however, even if we live next to the church, find it an effort to put a foot out of doors in order to hear what is needful for us to mend our lives. So far are we from pursuing, even half-hungry, the preacher as far as the sea-shore or the wilderness that we find nothing more tiresome than hearing the word of God. There is today no lack of preachers, but a want of listeners; they produce a hundred excuses for staying away, and there is no shortage of those who deliberately avoid sermons lest their consciences should be troubled, so that the guilty are cast into self-judgment, fearing the tribunal of their own consciences.

According to the prophet Jeremiah, the roads of Sion lamented that none attended her solemnities, and indeed the roads to the church in our time have no less reason to make the same complaint, the roads to the tavern being the more frequented. There is no thronging to hear the preacher now, although if some charlatan promises to stage a ridiculous spectacle of some sort, or if a gathering in the town excites our curiosity, we are not slow to attend, all agog. In the meantime, preachers of the word of God count themselves fortunate if they are not mocked for their labours; we must never take what they say so lightly, as Holy Scripture so grievously complains.

Nonetheless, we cannot deny that there are many who do listen to sermons, even though the number of those who try to better themselves thereby is small. They have ears, but they need hands; they hear what they ought to do, but fail to do it, and so do not profit from hearing it. There are others who frequent

sermons only to satisfy their pious curiosity, others merely to pass the time; some come away at least more learned, although no better for what they hear. Some go to church only to be seen, others in order to see people whom they would find it harder to meet elsewhere. Finally, there are those who go only to laugh and mock what they hear, and those who go in order to catch up on their sleep, or chatter idly, or lend the preacher an ear which is so filled with other nonsense that it can take nothing more in. There are a few, of the more virtuous sort, who go intending to be instructed, and who desire nothing more than to come away better than they went; they learn not in order to widen their knowledge but to improve their lives, and hang on the preacher's every word, not withdrawing their attention until they feel themselves more virtuously inclined than before. 'There is none but is tamed, however wild he were, / If he but lends a patient ear.' The fold of Christ is distinguished from other errant flocks by their ears: they hear the word of God, and avidly obey it.

§2

The saying of St Augustine makes a deep impression on the minds of the Predestined: that those who indifferently hear the word of God are guilty of no less a crime than those who carelessly allow the body of Christ to fall to the ground. We should not pay too close heed to the preacher himself – the person who speaks – rather to Him who dictates what he is to say; for he has nothing to say which he is not charged to deliver by God. What am I, asks St Augustine, but a basket into which God has promised to pour seeds? I am to scatter them among you later, and you must not therefore consider the unworthiness of the basket so much as the worth of the seeds, and the dignity of the scatterer (*Homilies*, XXVI). A Christian is able to draw some measure of instruction from all things, and to profit from it. He can count it a mark of Predestination if, sitting with Mary Magdalene at the feet of our Lord, he hangs onto His words with such strong chains of attentiveness that no concerns for domestic business, no sister's murmurs nor any friend's enticements can draw him away. However, harkening to the word of God and, what is more, remembering it, is not itself a sign of Predestination unless we then proceed to act on it. What use is it to us to have eaten anything, if as soon as we have swallowed it we throw it up again? The Mother of God was particularly praised for preserving in her heart all the words which were bestowed upon her (*Luke* 2). The Royal Psalmist, too, says that 'I have hidden your words in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.' Those who hear this word and keep it in a pure and holy heart, bearing fruit patiently thereby, are rightly likened to a fertile soil (*Luke* 8). To read without

understanding, and to hear without remembering, are not to have read or heard at all. A painter is wasting his time and effort if he paints a picture in watercolours upon a table and straight away rubs it off with a sponge; it is just as great a folly for Christians to hear and immediately forget what they have heard. Therefore we must endeavour to remember, and keep no mere dead recollection but a living one which spurs us to carry out what we have heard. No man ever entered Heaven by KNOWING what was to be done, but by DOING it; and he is far from action who will not even listen to what is to be done (*John* 13). The books of Holy Scripture are the purest fount of knowledge, which it is not possible to drink dry, no matter how many drink of it, nor how often. It is the nature of this rich spring that the deeper into it one dives, the more it overflows with divine meaning, never to be exhausted (John Chrysostom, *Oration IV, On Lazarus*). Just as in summer the ant stores up food for the winter, so the Christian in a period of calm should store up the word of God against the tempests of disaster to come. It is surely true that nobody ever despised his betterment in this way, who was not subsequently punished for it by God; who felt it to his own cost and was seen by others to have done so. GOD has ordained that one person should learn from another, and submit to his instruction. Thus we see that King David, himself the wisest of men and guided in many matters by the Holy Spirit, still failed to do penance for his sins of adultery and murder, although he was aware that they were expressly forbidden by law, until he was reprimanded by Nathan. Jesus preached Himself out of the clouds to St Paul (*Acts* 9) and yet sent him to Ananias for further instruction. Cornelius was assured by an angel that his prayers and alms were pleasing to God, and yet was told to go to St Peter for his better instruction (*Acts* 10). The treasurer of Queen Candace of the Ethiopians, when reading the Book of Isaiah in his chariot, had not an angel for his instructor, but St Philip (*Acts* 8). Moses himself, whose familiarity with God might allow us to deem him one of His intimates, was instructed (with many a taunt) when no more than a boy, by his foreign father-in-law in the arts of how he must govern the Israelites (*Exodus* 18). Even Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of Ages, would sit among the learned doctors and demand their counsel, so that none, of whatever sex, condition or standing they may be, should go without hearing the word of the Lord (*Luke* 2).

§3

'But perhaps,' you may ask, 'you are known to be a learned man?' This is a question well known to me, as is the status which many Doctors build upon it. Oh, the proud erudition of mortal wit! Who ever arrived at such a plateau of

learning, or such an advanced age, without being ignorant of far more than ever he had learned? Suppose you were the most learned man alive, with such a pre-eminence of understanding above all others that you could hear nothing during a sermon which you had not heard before. What then of your will, your memory? Are they never to be inflamed or stirred? Is not the one to be provoked, the other refreshed? How easy it is for the memory to fail, and how prone to error is the will, without daily prompts which rectify the first and inform the second, whereby it is not only profitable but in fact essential that everybody should attend sermons. The evil should attend for their own betterment, the good for their perseverance, the ignorant for their instruction, the learned to refresh the memory of what they know; so that even if they learn nothing new, they do not forget what is already known. The wise man, by hearing, becomes wiser (*Proverbs* 1) and the ears of the wise seek still after learning (*Proverbs* 18). Otherwise infamous for his wicked deeds, Herod was at least not so rude and barbarous as to disdain the ordinary preacher of his court; and he *heeded his words and acted on what he heard* (*Mark* 6). From this we may presume that Herod was not only willing to listen, but that he had a tireless patience, for it is certain that St John the Baptist could not have inspired him to do so much unless he had heard him often and on many subjects. We must not suppose that St John would merely accuse the king of committing many flagrant crimes; by the strength of his arguments he challenged them, setting his vices before him so that he would be dissuaded from committing them further. It could never have been that with one sermon alone St John would succeed in confronting the king's adultery and his other egregious crimes; rather he must devote a sermon to each one of them, or even a multitude of sermons to each, for nothing less than a salvo of charges could impinge upon the king's mind, fixed in wickedness as it was; and yet the king *heeded his words*. Furthermore, although St John often publicly and to the king's face condemned the illicit taking of his brother's wife, and with good reason doubtless demonstrated the unlawfulness of the deed, yet still the king *heeded his words*. So great was Herod's wish to hear the charges continually laid against him by St John that we are not to imagine him hiding behind a diplomatic silence the remainder of his flagrant crimes, as the testimony of St Luke makes clear: 'Herod the Tetrarch [was] censured by John for his relations with his brother's wife Herodias and for all the other crimes he had committed' (*Luke* 3). Even though St John did not scruple to charge him with tyranny over his treatment of the people, his exaction of vast taxes, or the prodigious spending of this wealth on his immoderate lusts, still the king *heeded his words*. Moreover so great was Herod's patience in hearing John out that neither the first sermon – the most vehement of all – nor the second or third, nor indeed any of the rest succeeded in making him feel aggrieved, for always he *heeded his words*. Neither did he

believe John's sermons to be too frequent, too long, too simple, too popular, too severe or too harsh: he *heeded his words*. Well might he complain that it was hard to adhere to what the saint so earnestly inculcated; he could not, however, (with Seneca) complain that fortune envied him the knowledge of the truth (Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, VI, 3). 'I will show you,' he said, 'the difficulties which befall great men, and what is lacking in those who possess all other things; namely, someone to tell them the truth. Do you not see how for want of that license they are all driven to ruin? They have no faithful friend either to persuade or disabuse them of the rightness of things, for those around them take it as a duty and point of study to deceive them with servile flattery.' St John was so far from being guilty of this crime in his own dealings with Herod, as to be incapable of hiding the truth from the king even as he admonished him with all sincerity of heart and liberty of speech, aware that he lent his ear willingly: 'It is not lawful for you, O Herod, it is not lawful.' Where now are those dainty and curious ears, which, hearing themselves addressed by such words, no matter how misunderstood or twisted in meaning, prefer to rail against the preacher and the congregation? One must wonder whether they outstrip Herod in all his wickedness, parricide and adultery, because while like him they refuse to amend their lives, they also abstain from sermons, the only remedial course for them, which Herod never did. He who refuses to be persuaded by his teacher will yield to the persuasion of the Deceiver, and that scholar is on a fool's errand who would be taught by none but himself. Whoever thinks so highly of himself as to scorn all other masters shows more arrogance than erudition. Neither can there be any love or virtue in him who hates or neglects the knowledge of heavenly things. The beginning of our estrangement from GOD is our disdain for hearing His word, and no-one can love God who does not desire spiritual instruction; for just as gold is tried by the touchstone, so are the thoughts of men revealed by the Gospel of Christ.

SIGNVM VII. PRÆD. 125

Vnicuiq; mandavit Deus de proximo suo. *Ecclesi.* ¹⁷

ELEEMOSYNA CVM
BENIGNO AFFECTV



*Multò maius est, esurientem pascere Christum, quam
in Christi nomine mortuos suscitare; nam illuc tu de
Christo bene mereris, hic autem ipse dicit. Chrys. hom.
36. ad pop.*

SEVENTH SIGN OF PREDESTINATION: *SYMBOL THE SEVENTH*

Is the tobacco-plant, most excellent in the relief of wounds and ulcers. Poverty is a grievous ulcer of the body, but sin is a more grievous ulcer of the soul. The gift of charity – *alms offered with a generous heart to the needy* – tends wonderfully to both, and is here represented by the tobacco-plant. As the Apostle tells us: ‘As the chosen of GOD [...], the holy people whom He loves, you are to be clothed in heartfelt compassion’ (*Colossians* 3). He requires not only the helping hand, but also the willing soul of the giver; and he who is truly blessed will have understanding of the poor and needy, for the Lord will deliver him on the day of evil (*Psalms* 40). This is a truth affirmed by Holy Scripture (*Proverbs* 22), which relates that he who borrows becomes the servant of him who lends; but our most rich God borrows from us in the persons of the poor, from which the truth of the premise may be safely inferred. The minor term of this syllogism is that of Solomon: ‘Whoever is kind to the poor is lending to the Lord, who will repay him the kindness done’ (*Proverbs* 19). In the mouth of St Augustine God begs alms of us: ‘Give to me a part of that which I have given to you, for I request only a portion of what is already mine. In giving you make restitution and oblige me, your debtor, for what you give, for I am your benefactor in all you have. Give me temporal things, and I shall repay you in eternal ones.’ Treating of the love of the poor, St Gregory of Nazianzus²⁴ says: ‘Be as God is to those in calamity, by imitating His mercy, for man has nothing in him more divine than the power to oblige others by his benefits.’ The poor are committed to you as to another God, and such a God on earth was Job: ‘I was eyes for the blind, and feet for the lame. Who but me was father of the poor?’ (*Job* 29). Tobit, that man so dear to God, says: ‘Alms-giving delivers from death and saves people from passing down to darkness’ (*Tobit* 4). The giving of alms will be a great boon to all those who have practised it, when they come to stand before their God.

§1

St John Chrysostom writes: ‘It is better to be practised in the art of giving alms than to be a king’ (*Homilies* 33 and 36), for it is that which builds us everlasting

mansions in Heaven and teaches us how to resemble our God. It is a great thing to be a man, but to be a man of mercy is a precious thing. 'A kindly eye will earn a blessing; such a person shares out food with the poor' (*Proverbs* 22). To continue speaking with the same golden mouth of St John Chrysostom, almsgiving is what likens us to God: it is the mother of charity and the distinguishing mark of Christian virtue, which sets the disciples of Christ apart from others. It is that which cures our infirmities, which washes away the stains of our soul; the ladder which was built up to Heaven (*Homilies* 6: *On Titus*). 'Store up treasures for yourselves in Heaven,' as Christ teaches (*Matthew* 6). Listen, O you wealthy, and learn a new art taught by Heaven, a new way of gathering riches. Be liberal with it: you were mistaken before, the way to become rich is to give wealth away, not to hoard it. He who distributes his wealth among the poor in this world is laying it up for his own use in the next. Neither is it necessary to give our money to the poor by the handful; give pennies or small coins or a crust of bread (doing so with a willing heart) and in return you shall receive whole worlds of opulence and plenty. In ancient times the City Censors were wont to visit the houses of the citizens, to see whether their clothes were moth-eaten, their meat wormy, their bread mouldy, and with good reason: if such a visit were made today, some would be found who prefer to leave their possessions to vermin rather than give them to the poor. But now we know how to dispose securely of what we have. 'Store up treasures for yourselves in Heaven, where neither moth nor woodworm destroys them and thieves cannot break in and steal' (*Matthew* 6). Manna was only harmful when it was left until the next day, and no stock diminishes so swiftly as that which its owner tries to preserve untouched; there is no better way of securing it than to entrust it to the hands of beggars and the stomachs of the poor. These are the best granaries in which to store your corn, for there it is protected from fire, and you are sure to receive it back with interest. Had Absalom cut off his golden locks, his hair would have been an adornment to his head rather than the agency of his destruction. If, also, the wealthier among us would contribute a portion of their means to the upkeep of the poor, they will count as many friends as they now have coins. As it is, nothing is achieved by their covetousness, and the more money they have, the more dangerous is the life they live. As we read in *Ecclesiasticus*: 'Spend your money on your brother or your friend, do not leave it under a stone to rust away' (*Ecclesiasticus* 29). Christ bids us: 'Give, and there will be gifts for you' (*Luke* 6). Wells become impure if they are left unused, and the more water is drawn from them the purer they become. Those predestined to Heaven would, if they could, give their hearts when they give alms, so willingly do they give of themselves; and in this sense Christ calls the merciful blessed, intending not only those who have much at their disposal, but also those who desire to show mercy to all. Pythagoras taught

that like called to like, and in this kind of market too one commodity is not to be obtained but through exchange of that same commodity. Will you obtain mercy? Only through mercy is it to be purchased. By giving to others, however, will you not impoverish your own self? What a vain fear! To trust your own abilities rather than the promises of Christ! How many have been beggared by their avarice, while charity has undone no-one? God is with us in liberality, but yields to none in munificence. 'Give, and there will be gifts for you' (*Luke* 6). The poor widow gained more from Elijah than his modest victuals (*1 Kings* 17), and Elisha's hostess was more obliged to him than he to her (*2 Kings* 4).

§ 2

There are many, although they are not among the Predestined, who rarely give alms, and then only maliciously. To give maliciously is to give what we ourselves cannot bear to have, which we cannot be rid of in any other way and which we have no use for, such as worm-eaten meat, mouldy bread, soured wine or spoiled vinegar. If these people have anything so putrid or stinking that they would not give it to a dog, they then decide to bestow it on the poor: what a great gift of charity! Alas, O Christians, how often with smooth blandishments do we deceive ourselves! As Baruch admonished, this is not to offer olive oil, but olive stones (*Baruch* 6). The reason for God's rejection of Cain and his offerings was this: although he could have brought the finest fruits of the earth, he brought the worst (*Genesis* 4). If you have little, it will suffice to give as much as you wish; but if you have much, beware giving little. If you cannot help the poor with deeds, at least give comfort with your words and succour with your heart. Those Israelites were not despised who brought flowers and goat's hair, and neither were their offerings, because they lacked anything better to give. If, however (as St John Chrysostom says: *Homilies* 32: *On Hebrews*), they had brought those offerings, being able to bring gold, a curse would have befallen them. There are others ready enough to give charity, but as long as they are as given to sordid pleasures as to alms, the oil of mercy is tainted by their lascivious ways. The Anazarbian people of Cilicia²⁵ attributed the fecundity of their olive trees to the chastity of their maidens, and so allowed only them to plant the trees and gather the fruit. Let Christians be assured that there is such an enmity between our olive of mercy and the myrtle of Venus that they cannot be grown in the same enclosure, and that alms which are offered by a concupiscent soul are unworthy of God. He is displeased by the liberality of hands which proceeds from a libidinous soul. There are others still, who, although not mired in carnality, desire that they be seen praising and giving alms, and they achieve nothing thereby except the

adulteration of the oil of mercy. And why, O my Christians, do you let your left hand know what your right hand does? Such as these were rightly compared by Job to the olive tree, prodigal with its flowers (*Job* 15). As St Gregory says, this tree, no matter how profuse in blossom, will lose all its fruit when once exposed to a biting wind (*Moralia on Job*, XII, 26). So it is with those who, however charitable they may be to the poor, do so only in order to be seen by others, for the spirit of their giving corrupts the fruits they give. The alms bestowed by the Predestined, however, are seen by no eye save that which sees all, and they expect no praise for it except the recognition of God alone from whom they anticipate their reward. Although alms have golden wings, as St John Chrysostom teaches, they are not like the peacock, courting admiration on earth, while the true reward awaits in Heaven (*Homilies*, 32): it is to Heaven that charity soars on its golden wings, there to stand before Christ, acknowledged in the person of the poor. The giving of alms is so far removed from self-advertisement as to be recognized only in the gift of those who dispose of it, so unconcerned is the giver by the opinion of others, as long as he is certain that it is known by Him who can and will reward him for it. This is why St Cyprian calls a soul thus disposed to charity a sure guarantee of security, whereby we have made God our debtor and commended ourselves to Christ our judge.

§ 3

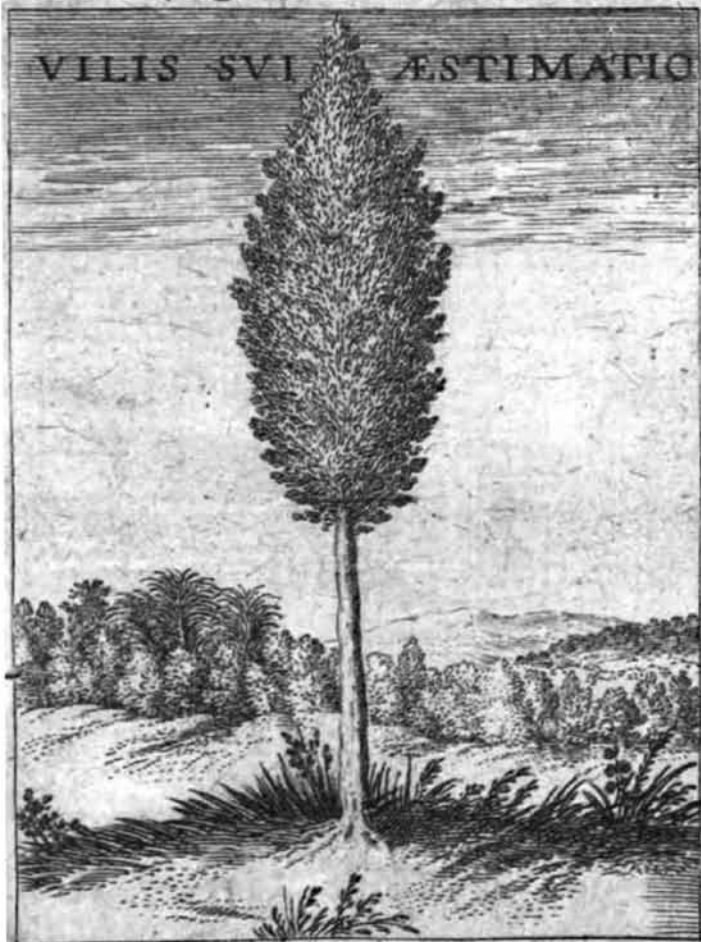
At the Day of Judgment we shall be rigorously examined on the question of mercy, and those found to have been callous, hard-hearted and merciless will be condemned by a terrible decree: to go, accursed, into everlasting fire (*Matthew* 25). Those, however, whom divine Predestination has eternally assigned to the company of angels, may confidently say to the Judge: 'Deal freely with us as we have dealt with others. Bestow Yourself upon us, for we have bestowed alms upon the poor. We have shown compassion to others, so that compassion may be shown to us; we have done what You required of us, and it now falls to You to do what You promised.' The Judge will not take offence at these words, but will acknowledge the debt, and the elect will behold in the wide wound of Christ's side these words inscribed with gemstones: '*Come, you blessed*, and possess your kingdom, enjoy what you most desire. I acknowledge my promises and I commend the mercy you have shown, for which you merit so great a reward; come and accept your reward, whose worth is beyond reckoning. All that you did for my poor, you did for me. Your charity provided me with meat and drink, your garments clothed me, you put a roof over the head of a stranger, your love broke the bars of the prisons where I was held, and for this I say: *Come*,

you blessed. For those crusts of bread you gave to the hungry, come and feast at my table eternally. For not turning away wanderers from your houses, I have made a place for you in the dwellings of the angels. For clothing the shivering limbs of the naked, come and robe yourselves in the immortal royal purple. *Come, you blessed.* O what a recompense is here! The cloak of glory and the everlasting delights and treasures of Heaven, all for a few rags, a few pennies or crumbs of bread. Mercy shall make a place to every man according to the merit of his works, and the understanding of his path in life (*Ecclesiasticus* 16). So true is this, that it should persuade all: none should forgo purchasing Heaven at so cheap a price. As St Augustine most truly says: If you would be a successful merchant, give what you cannot keep, in exchange for that which you cannot lose; part with a little, in exchange for a hundredfold return; give a little money to the poor, in exchange for the Kingdom of Christ; give a piece of bread for forgiveness of your sins; give away a garment in exchange for a stole of glory (cf. St Caesarius of Arles, *Homily 13*)²⁶. Give these contemptible things in return for eternal ones. And what folly it is, as St John Chrysostom says, to leave behind the substance from which you will depart, rather than sending it to the place where you are bound (*Homily On Matthew 6*). Let us then offer up what we have to that Fatherland where we are destined to go.

SIGNVM VIII. PRÆD. 144

Nisi efficiamini sicut paruuli, non intrabitis in regnum cælorum. *Matth. 18.*

VILIS SVI ÆSTIMATIO



Nihil est quod nos ita et hominibus gratos faciat et Deo, quam si vitæ merito magni, humilitate simus infimi. S. Hier. epist. 14. ad Celant.

EIGHTH SIGN OF PREDESTINATION: *SYMBOL THE EIGHTH*

Is an *abject opinion of ourselves*, signified by the cypress tree, ever fragrant and flourishing, which not only forbids corruption in itself but preserves other bodies from the stench of decay. It destroys the worm of pride which is within us, threatening to corrupt all men, and it keeps us safe from the rot and corruption of complacency. As King David says: 'There is no room in my house for anyone who practises pride' (*Psalms* 101). It is rare to find a wholly curative medicine that does not contain a trace of poison or some other drug. So too there can be no vices without a trace of pride, which you will see if you consider them. 'Since the first stage of pride is sin, whoever clings to it will pour forth filth' (*Ecclesiasticus* 10). Pride is the tinder-box of malign wit, from which it flares into many and various vices, such as hate or love, but chiefly envy, and it is noxious to all forms of suffering. There are none more constantly anxious than those who covet praise and believe themselves worthy of it. They are ever ready to suspect themselves despised when that debt is not paid to their satisfaction, believing others to be in defiance of them, and believing themselves most bitterly vindicated thereby. They live in as dark an ignorance of others' virtues as of their own vices, and in their swollen arrogance set their faces against piety, fidelity and all that is most sacred to mankind, greedy as they are for celebrity and esteem. Moreover, whilst the substance of other vices is of the most abject, that of pride is generally of the most noble, preying on worthy actions, on erudition of all kinds, on virtue and even on sanctity itself, like the tiny worms which gnaw away at the better types of fruit. A proud person represents the ways of the Devil, for just as one man may seek to raise himself to the highest, so another will compete not with him alone, but seek indeed to be preferred to all others. But God never fails to resist the proud man (*James* 4), casting him down from his lofty heights more easily than a sentry thrown from a tower. He cuts down those who scale the walls as easily as a gardener lops those shoots which grow higher than the rest. In humility Saul was elevated to a throne, from whence in pride he was cast down again. There are some who have a natural aversion to certain types of food, or to spiders or cats: it is the nature of God to execrate and have a horror of the proud. 'Every arrogant heart is abhorrent to the Lord: be sure this will not go unpunished' (*Proverbs* 16). Just as pestilential diseases break out in various parts of man's body, so pride

is not confined to any particular place: now it takes residence in the eyes, now the tongue, now it occupies the hands, now it borrows our clothes: it sits in such settled immobility in another's bearing that not one hundred preachers could dislodge it. There are others who carelessly assume you are unaware of the secret arts they use to profess pride in their sumptuous banquets, magnificent houses, well-bred families or exquisite furnishings. Pride is in so much that we do as to be like the air we breathe, although so subtle as to be barely perceptible. We descend lower than abjection itself, we utter words of honey and roses, the polished eloquence of the courtroom, we bow down before all so that we may thereby rise above all, and having attained that great height we can tolerate neither superiors nor equals. Why so arrogant, O thing of dust and ashes? The merest blast of death can scatter you totally. Whence such complacency, in one who stinks in the nostrils of men, of angels, of the highest God? While you yet breathe earth (O limb of the old Adam!) you befoul the air with the stench of Lucifer. If the tallness of the cypress pleases you as much as its aroma, you may climb it on condition that from its lofty heights you disdain only yourself. This is true greatness and true nobility: to entertain humble notions in exalted places, to abase yourself, and (which is proper to the Predestined) to impress Heaven with your merits while in your own eyes you cower on the ground. As St Bernard says, there is ever a bond between divine grace and humility (*Homilies 4, On the Mass*). What sublime humility it is which honour cannot remove nor glory make insolent! For an abject soul to abase itself is no great matter, but *humility in honour* is a great and rare virtue. Do you hear this, O kings, princes and lords of the earth? Do you hear it, you who are less learned than arrogant, you whose possessions make you disdain all others? *Humility in honour*: a rare virtue. It is the effect of true humility that those who condemn themselves out of their own mouths for the greatest unworthiness are esteemed by Heaven for the greatest sanctity. Abraham, that most worthy of men, was in his own eyes mere *ashes and dust* (*Genesis 18*). St Peter, the Rock of the Church, openly and with all his soul professed himself a *sinful man* (*Luke 5*). St Paul, that vessel of election and Prince of Apostles, called himself an *aborted issue and the least of the Apostles* (*1 Corinthians 15*). Know this: the basis of all exaltation is nothing but humility, and a miserable estimation of the self.

§1

Pride is the ruin of all virtues, and a slippery slope for men and angels. O Lord, what a change was there between Heaven and earth when the most splendid of all the angels was cast out of Heaven, and the most miserable of beggars

lifted into Heaven by angels! Lucifer the Proud fell from there, while Lazarus the ulcerous ascended, he whom one can easily credit counting his sores more than his virtues. Out of genuine self-contempt he seemed more patient towards others than towards himself. As a certain saint has eloquently and truly said: He is worth little who in his own eyes appears to be worth something, and he is worth nothing at all who counts himself the greatest of all. St Bernard is in agreement with this, saying: 'He lacks everything who imagines himself lacking nothing.' We may add that they scarcely appear to be born for Heaven who, so pleased with their own selves, are the proudest judges of others' lives and the vainest admirers of their own; and whilst they turn a blind eye to their own deeds they cannot rightly judge the deeds of those around them. Out, O vain souls! The gates of Heaven are closed to such peacocks. It is reserved for the Predestined, who judge nobody's life so rigorously as their own, curse nobody's ways so much as their own, who more readily indulge others than themselves, and are never so severe with others as with themselves. Have mercy on us! We are but dust and shadows, following all too soon after those who have gone before, yet glorying in our origins, pointing to venerable pictures of our ancestors as if we could number many such in our past. 'Human life, a mere puff of wind, days as fleeting as a shadow' (*Psalms* 144). Wherever we turn our eyes, we find them filling with tears. If we fix them on Heaven while gazing aloof on our homeland, we cannot but feel ourselves to be in exile; if we fix them on the earth, we are reminded warningly of the grave, and however much we may trample it with our feet in this life, it will at the last freely claim our heads. Shall we look upon ourselves? What a lovely red fruit! But it is all worm-eaten within: corruption, disease and death have taken up residence. Shall we look into our own hearts? What a dreadful pit we see, a nest of vipers and serpents. Woe to us! We swarm with vices but do not condemn ourselves. We are beset by miseries, follies and sins, and yet like to point to ourselves as blessed, wise and learned men. Meanwhile, the Predestined turn all this to their greatest advantage, and in consideration of their daily actions and their selves find cause for self-contempt. They can easily – with St Paul – be induced to slight and despise all other things who already slight and despise themselves. Whoever desires to be truly blessed must proclaim himself despised, and from this proceed to despise all things save God. The Predestined may appreciate the fine words of St John Chrysostom: 'It is as great a thing for a man to set little store by himself as it is to do great deeds' (*Homilies* 3, *On Matthew*). As it is written: 'He who aspires to be the greatest among you shall be the least in Heaven (should he ever arrive there).' The Predestined well know that the path of humility, though hard and rugged at first, gradually becomes smoother and easier underfoot. They know that this steep slope awaits them, and, seeking out all who would guide them on their way, ascend it readily.

They love to be despised, and seek out opportunities of being so; they delight in seeing themselves held in contempt, and are glad to insult themselves more than they are insulted by any foe. So far are they from avenging their insults by the sword, that they say not a word in their defence: no hand is raised, no sword brandished to avenge a wrong, for they know that the more contempt is heaped on them, the greater is the good that will be theirs. The Predestined have learned in the school of Jesus Christ that they are none the worse for being derided, nor lessened by the contempt of others. A man is no more than he appears in the eyes of God, not a rung higher (cf. Thomas à Kempis, *Imitatio Christi*, III, 50)²⁷; neither does God judge men by their own estimations (1 *Kings* 16). We seem great to God when we seem small to ourselves, and we are the least to Him when we are the greatest to ourselves. The deeper the well, the purer its water; the viler one's self-estimation, the more gracious one is to God. All that we esteem highly in ourselves is to be abased, our proud spirits razed to the ground, our universal pride obliterated by woe, ignorance and imperfection. Musk recovers its savour, having once been buried in a malodorous place; we too, having acknowledged our vileness, will not exhale the odours we once did, but will breathe a fresher air to the improvement of our lives.

§2

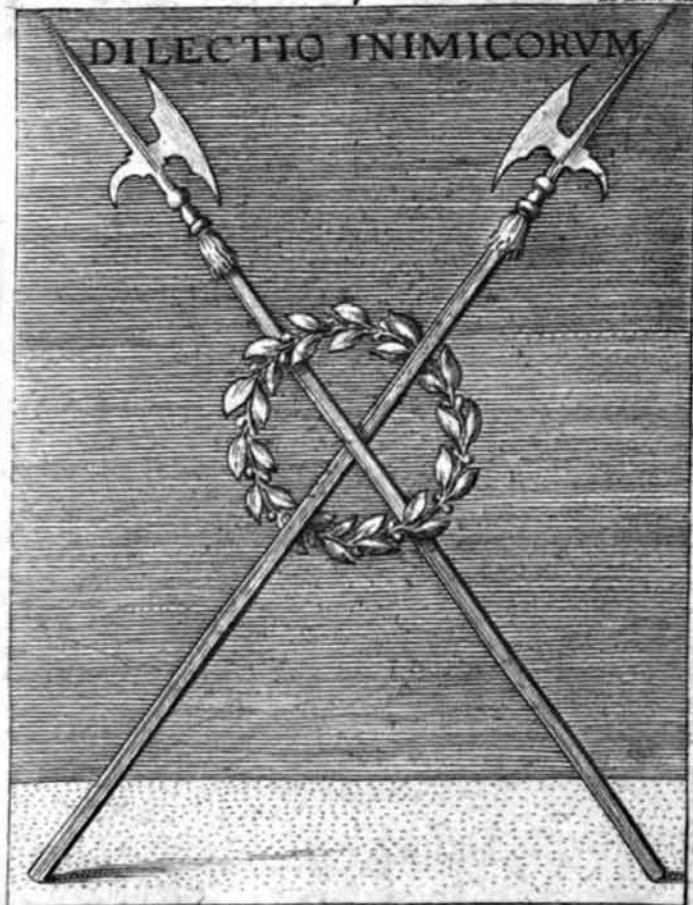
When a most holy man once was asked the surest way to Heaven, he replied: '*For a man always to accuse himself*'. St Augustine declares that this is the very sum of Christian teaching (*De sancta virginitate*, XXXI), and St Ambrose states that: 'It is the mark of the Elect that they acknowledge their failings and know their weaknesses' (*Apologia proph. David*, IX). St Gregory says that it is the habit of the reprobate always to be doing wrong, yet never retracting the wrong that is done (*Moralia on Job*, V). In the blindness of their minds such folk gloss over all they do, and nothing but punishment can make them aware of it. The Elect, however, daily trace their actions to the fount of those thoughts from which they sprang: but on that account they are not more secure, for there is much, seen by God, that they do not themselves see. The Ecclesiastic counsels thus: 'The greater you are, the more humbly you should behave, and then you will find favour with the Lord; for great though the power of the Lord is, he accepts the homage of the humble' (*Ecclesiasticus* 3). Truly the greatest of all perfections is to have knowledge of our imperfections, and a soul which understands its own failings is more deserving of praise than a soul which fails to understand the limits of the earth, the course of the stars, the qualities of plants, the profundities of the earth or the loftiness of Heaven. Do you mean to build an edifice of great

height? First, lay your foundations in humility. All aspire to the summit, but humility is the first step towards it. Our homeland is on high, but the road to it is low, and who can seriously yearn for that homeland who refuses to take to the road? (Augustine, *De verbi Domini*) It is true, as St Jerome so rightly deplores, that many pursue the shadow, but few the real substance, of humility (*Epistles*, 27). Few indeed pursue it: few, but blessed and Predestined to Heaven, disliking themselves the more they see of themselves, and as contemptible in their own eyes as they are precious in the eyes of God. As St Gregory says: 'Those who see least of themselves are the least displeased with themselves' (*Moralia*, XXXV, 5). Many there are who know many things, but do not know themselves, and they appear smaller in God's eyes the larger they appear in their own. The best and surest way to ascend to God is through the knowledge of our own unworthiness. As it was truly put by Cassiodorus: 'In descending, we ascend to Heaven' (*Expositio psalmorum*, VI).

SIGNVM IX^o PRÆD. 163

Noli vinci a malo, sed vince in bono malum.

ad Rom. 12.



*Gravids labor est inimicos diligere, pro persecutori-
bus supplicare: nec nos negamus: labor quidem est
in hoc sæculo non parvus, sed grande erit et premium
in futuro. Aug. serm. 5. de S^{to} Stephano.*

NINTH SIGN OF PREDESTINATION: *SYMBOL THE NINTH*

Is a pair of crossed pikestaffs encircled by an olive wreath, as if to say: *Love your enemies*. The olive branch has long been the pre-eminent symbol of peace; the olive wreath here reconciles the warring pikestaffs, and, entwined round them, gives us to understand love for our foes. As Christ teaches us: 'I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in Heaven' (*Matthew 5*). You may say that this is an arduous and difficult task. But the harder it is, the more grace it shows to God, and the more useful it is to us. There are many ways in which to express charity, and they all go toward the remission of our sins, but none is more efficacious than to forgive from our heart those who have done us wrong (Augustine, *Enchiridion*). When Christ was hanging on the Cross, and only His tongue was unaffected by the wounds and lacerations of His body, He used it above all else to intercede for those who had crucified Him in word and deed. In this way He became a most eloquent and persuasive advocate for his enemies. In this doctrine, taught from the Cross, our Lord has had disciples, but few in number. When St Stephen was praying for his enemies, the heavens opened up as if all the celestial denizens were intent on witnessing such a wondrous spectacle; and whilst that most holy proto-martyr stood to pray for himself, he went on his knees to pray for his enemies, and when the heavens opened he beheld Jesus similarly standing, on the right hand of God's virtue (*Acts 7*).

If I may have permission to enquire, O Lord, why thus award the prize and triumph of victory before the fight has begun? Why does the door to Heaven open as soon as Stephen has opened his mouth? When he has not yet departed this life, why is he granted a vision of You? Why, when other deserving souls are granted Your vision only after they have ascended to the topmost recesses of Your mansion? What has Stephen done to merit this opening of Heaven's gate? He is still in the arena, exposed to peril, and praying; but – it is for his enemies that he is praying. O happy and potent prayer! Let us consider the reason for this premature prize. It is because God is so pleased with one who remits the sins of others and intercedes on his enemies' behalf that He sets aside all His majesty, and favours His champion so far as not to make him wait until he enters Heaven before receiving his crown, but brings it forward now in most splendid

beatitude. He not only awaits the prize warrior at His palace gates, but hastens him on his way for having loved his deadliest enemies, for having spent his last breath and shed his tears for those who procured his own downfall. Such is the privilege granted by the eternal King to those who forgive their enemies, so that he who does wrong, rather than he who suffers a wrong, sustains the injury. Thus King David, who fought and vanquished bears and lions, and whose courage was such that no fear ever troubled him, chose to pardon Saul – his worst enemy – rather than take his life, even though he had him at his spear's end more than once. The meaning of his victory songs is, therefore, this: 'If I have repaid my ally with treachery or spared one who attacked me unprovoked, may an enemy hunt me down and catch me' (*Psalms* 7). The mighty St Paul, who challenged not only armed troops to combat, but even death, and Hell itself, yet prayed so sweetly and kindly for his enemies as to say: 'When we are cursed, we answer with a blessing; when we are hounded, we endure it passively; when we are insulted, we give a courteous answer' (1 *Corinthians* 4).

§1

The noblest and most generous form of victory is to offer forgiveness when you have the chance to take revenge, and it is more glorious by far to best an enemy by silence than by confrontation. It is honourable for a man to turn away from arguments (*Proverbs* 20) and, as St Ambrose says: 'To avenge oneself is not an act of strength but of baseness and cowardice: he who vindicates himself does not vanquish, but is vanquished by, his enemy' (*De officiis ministrorum*, I, 36). The prince of philosophers²⁸ is of the same mind: 'Just as it is the sign of a weak stomach not to be able to digest solid foods, so the cowardly man is unable to stomach harsh words' (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IV, 3). There is no clearer proof of living as a Christian than by forgiving one's enemies. To be well exercised in virtue we need either a faithful friend or a bitter enemy, and neither can injure us without doing himself a greater injury. In the words of St John Chrysostom: 'Revenge in the heart which harbours it is more venomous than a snake' (*Homilies*, 41, *On the Acts of the Apostles*). Nor is it a lesser evil to avenge a wrong than to commit one. Have you struck down your enemy? Then you have fatally wounded yourself. He who takes live coals from the fire will burn his own hands before harming anyone else; those who strive to hurt others are themselves the first to be hurt, and often the last too, when the blows which they intend for others are deflected onto themselves (cf. Lactantius, *De ira Dei*).²⁹ Whoever hates another first wounds his own soul; and he who does not love, abides in death (1 *John* 3). Yet it is hard, they say, it is hard to love one's enemy. Indeed, but

far harder still to burn in Hell amid a host of enemies. It is difficult to love him whom we judge hardly worthy of hate, but more difficult to hear those dread words ring out: '*Go, you cursed souls, into everlasting fire.*' It is very hard to spare from harm anyone who has so often harmed others, but those who demur at steep slopes will never climb a mountain, and those who hate their enemies will never attain Heaven. We undertake long pilgrimages from which we may well return worse than when we set off; we make our offerings at the altar, but all the while our hearts are of stone; we make sure we receive the Jubilee Indulgence, but are still plotting our revenge. O Christian, God has granted you a Plenary Indulgence on the threshold of your own temple, and all you must do is utter the single word: *Ignosco* ['I forgive'] for all your sins to be remitted. Forgive, and you will be forgiven (*Luke* 6). Otherwise, if you deliver your body to the flames quite devoid of charity, even for your enemies, all will have been in vain (1 *Corinthians* 13). He is accounted richest who numbers the most debtors: your enemies are in your debt on account of many injuries, so keep them indebted to you. Settle your account and calculate what is owed to others, and what to yourself: you are a rich man if no debts are outstanding. What then do you owe to God? Given your negligence, you will be unable to settle your debts to Him, so remit God to your debtors and by their intervention clear the account which you could never have settled yourself. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Pardon your neighbour when he wrongs you, and through your petition your own sins will be pardoned (*Ecclesiasticus* 28). If you overlook those petty differences, your own vast debts will be cancelled by God. As St Jerome notes: O dread sentence! God will not cancel our great debts unless we cancel our brothers' lesser ones, and we must in the end expect from God just as much quarter as we give our enemies.

§2

Therefore, have mercy on yourself at least, O mankind, and love your enemy before hating yourself. The pleasure of revenge is short, while that of mercy is everlasting. 'Do not be mastered by evil, but master evil with good' (*Romans* 12). If your enemy is hungry, give him food, if he is thirsty, give him water to drink: you can heap burning coals upon his head and the Lord will forgive you (*Proverbs* 25). 'Master evil with good.' Writing of this victory, St John Chrysostom says that in the Olympic Games presided over by the Devil, victory is earned by evil-doing; whilst in the stadium where Christ presides there is a quite different rule, whereby it is he who is stricken, rather than he who strikes, who earns the crown (*Homilies*, 12, *On Romans*). If we demonstrate meekness, how invincible we shall be, how far above all injury. Never say, therefore: 'I will

repay evil', but rather expect the Lord and He will acquit you (*Proverbs* 20). Neither say: 'I will treat my neighbour as my neighbour treated me' (*Proverbs* 24). Why to your own loss would you seek another's harm? Why, like a cur, bite the stones cast at you, rather than turn your hand against those who cast them? Why are you so blind as to rage against your enemy? Let him revile you, for it was God who appointed him (2 *Kings* 16). A man who has been condemned to death is indignant not at the executioner, but the judge, so why do you in all your silliness inveigh against your executioner rather than your judge? It is God who, for your greater good, has identified this antagonist of yours in consequence of the sins you have committed. The Devil could not have deprived Job of so much as a flock of sheep save by God's express permission. It was the Lord who gave, and the Lord – not the Devil – who took away (*Job* 1). Christ told Pilate: 'You would have no power over me [...] if it had not been given you from above' (*John* 19). This is an excellent response for you to make to your enemy. Many have thus profited more from their enemies than their dearest friends. If the tyrants had all been toppled, we should have had no martyrs; and if we had no enemies, we should be deprived of many a reward. Diocletian with his cruelty and violence towards the Church did no less to advance its cause than Constantine with his liberality and generosity. The rich farmer in the Gospels wished both the wheat and the tares to grow together (*Matthew* 13), whereas in our hasty and ill-tempered rush to perdition, we cry out at the first sight of a weed: into the fire with these thistles, into the flames with these tares, and into the pit of Hell with our enemies. Slow, good people, slow, for this is not the path we should follow: when the harvest comes the order will be given to the harvestman to gather first the coarse grasses and the tares into bundles to be burnt. Why then should we spite our zeal through our impetuous haste to drag our own enemies to punishment? These tares will not indeed escape the sickle or the fire, but the time for that harvest has not yet come. When teaching with His prayer of seven petitions to His holy Father, Christ has rightly to repeat and explain what pertains to the forgiveness of offences, as if to say that although it may have seemed sufficient to inculcate the lesson, it cannot be repeated often enough (*Matthew* 6). In this vein King David expands upon the statutes of divine law, reminding us to extend our love not only to those we know but also to strangers; to our adversaries as well as our benefactors; to the worthy and unworthy; to friends and foes alike (*Psalms* 118). No outward mark of dignity shows a man to be wealthy, learned or noble as much as love for his enemies shows him to be a true son of God (cf. John Chrysostom, *Homilies*, 2, *On Philipians*). But who, we might ask, could ever be so fully in control of himself as never to be provoked by a surge of wrath to some expression of hostility towards an enemy? It behoves Christians to master this rage and contain those violent impulses.

As St Augustine beautifully puts it: 'Do you hear yourself slandered? It is but a wind. Are you offended? It is but a gust. But when this wind and that gust come together, the ship is at risk of being wrecked and your heart is in peril! You seek revenge for those wounding words, and behold the shipwreck which you make for yourself. And why is all this? Because Christ is asleep in you; you have forgotten Christ. You do not remember how Christ, being crucified, tearfully implored His Father to pardon His enemies, not punish them' (*Sermons*, 3). So too is Christ asleep in you; He who taught you not merely to watch over your enemies, but even die for them. Awaken Christ within yourself, therefore, by saying these words: Who am I that I should seek to avenge myself? Who knows whether I may not encounter death before I meet my enemies to take revenge on them? In that case Christ will banish my departing soul from His company; He who taught kindness, not wrath; who was the preacher of submission, not revenge; the master of charity and forgiveness, not hatred and spite.

§3

But revenge has neither eyes nor ears, and is swept along blind and deaf by the upsurge of passion, which is why the old poet is right to be indignant:

That is how it goes with the rich:

If you do good by them their thanks weigh lighter

than a feather;

If you offend, their wrath is heavy as lead.

Plautus, *Poenulus*, Act 3, Scene VI

Indeed there are many in these days who allow their friendships to evaporate at the slightest hint of offence, whilst resentment of an injury is welded into their souls like lead. Let us be more ready to pardon, O Christians, lest we descend lower than the heathen; lest we be burdened with so many of their testimonies and examples that we are left unpardonable at that last great day. Pompey the Great was no less renowned for his loyalty to friends, and readiness to forgive offences and accept apologies, than for his three glorious triumphs over a third of the globe (Paterculus, *Compendium of Roman History*, II).³⁰ The Emperor Augustus pardoned Cinna, who had plotted against his life, in these terms:

‘O Cinna, I grant you your life once more; the first time as to a foe, now as to a traitor and a parricide.’ Whereupon Augustus made him a Consul, with the consequence that he remained the most loyal of friends, and at his death left all he had to the Emperor. Phocion³¹, a most innocent man and ruler under sentence of death, was asked by his friends – even as the executioner offered the poisoned chalice – what he would like them to say from him to his son. ‘Nothing,’ he replied, ‘except that no-one should remember the cup which this day the Athenians make me drink.’ It is said of Julius Caesar that he could overlook nothing except injuries. But which of us would like to be seen in this way? How conscious we are of offences against us, how we carry on suffering from them! While we inscribe favours in dust, we engrave injuries in flint. Nor can the authority of God bring us to a reconciliation. God long ago severely forbade all acts of vengeance, declaring: ‘*Vengeance is mine, I will repay*’ (*Deuteronomy* 23). Notwithstanding this, there are those who say: No, O Lord, *revenge belongs to me*, and I will have it! (*Romans* 12) The Lord retorts: ‘*Vengeance is mine*, leave me with it.’ The man persists: ‘No, O Lord, You are too easily appeased, and Your vengeance comes too late.’ Thus with most intolerable audacity do we usurp the might of the Lord: we tear the sword from His hands to strike down our enemies, whose punishment belongs to Him alone, and we assume the severity of a judge when we are ourselves party to the crime.

§4

It is recounted by Rufinus of Aquileia,³² and sundry other authorities on the Greeks (Paschasius [Radbertus], Pelagius [of Laodicea], Palladius [of Galatia])³³ how a person who had been slighted went to one Sifoius, an old holy man. After explaining the nature of the offence in magnified terms, as the habit is, he requested permission to declare himself a man and seek revenge. The old man insisted, with prayers, that this would show him not so much a man as a devil. None but God can dispose of fortune, none but God can wreak revenge; it should be revenge enough to know that his enemy would not be spared punishment at the hands of God Himself. The other replied that he had no intention of pardoning his enemy, or desisting until he had paid him back in kind. ‘Very well,’ said the holy one, ‘be a man, but be a Christian first, and listen to what your reason tells you, rather than yield to your passion.’ ‘But it is reason,’ replied the other, ‘which commends to me this course of action, by not sparing him who himself spares no-one.’ Sifoius answered: ‘You cannot determine that course of action yourself: it is in God’s power only to wield the sword of vengeance. God is the Lord of vengeance and may freely take revenge (*Psalms* 93), but we are not free to act in

this way. As I am sure you know, we are not only counselled but commanded by Christ to pardon our enemies, indeed pray for them, love them and do good by them.' 'Father,' replied the aggrieved one, 'my heart is a stormy sea and there will be no calming it until I have had my revenge.' 'Since you have thus hardened your resolve,' continued Sifoius, 'you must at least not be hasty in your wrath. First, let us pray.' They both then fell to their knees, and the old man began to pray, with these words: 'O God, we have no more need of Your help, neither do we ask You to have us in Your care. Henceforth we will look after ourselves; vengeance is ours, and we will take our revenge as we see fit. We are even now treading our foes underfoot as if they were footstools' (*Psalms* 109). These words so profoundly affected the other man that he prostrated himself before Sifoius, and promised with tears in his eyes never again to have the slightest thought of avenging himself. This is exactly what He, the most just, taught us: the mark of the sons of God is not to cause trouble by avenging grievances, but indeed reward them with benefits. As St Paul says: 'Make sure that people do not try to repay evil for evil' (1 *Thessalonians* 5: cf. *Romans* 12). In even stronger terms than St Paul does Jesus Christ enjoin us: 'Love your enemies and do good to them, and lend without any hope of return. You will have a great reward, and you will be children of the Most High, for He Himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked' (*Luke* 6). You urge this on us with good reason, and liberally make us this promise; but, dear Lord, how many are there who do not hear You? How many who do not heed Your commandment because their hates and their lives are as one? They protest against the effeminacy, as they see it, of overlooking a grievance. Their greatest happiness would be to pay back their enemy in his own coin; and if, like Solomon (2 *Kings* 3), their desires could become reality they would wish not for wisdom but for vengeance. They never cease importuning God: 'Grant me, O Lord, the souls of my enemies: the rest I leave to You.' This is the true spirit of revenge: not to heed God's commandment, nor fear His warnings; not to forgive an injury but return it as soon as it is offered; to vent one's spleen at the slightest word, and when anger is stoked, to yield to the wrath in one's heart until all enemies are destroyed. Tertullian explains that lust for vengeance works either to satisfy malice or a desire for glory. While glory is a mere vanity, malice is hateful to the Lord, especially when it makes of a single offence a double one (*De patientia*, VIII–X, XV). The only difference between the provoker of a grievance and the provoked party is that one is first in sinning, the other second; both are equally offensive to the Lord. He advises us to turn the other cheek, and not to desist until our patience has exhausted our enemy's malice, for this weighs more than attempting to defend ourselves. What right do we have to arrogate our defence to ourselves, when the Lord has reserved this for Himself? God will manage our patience: whoever entrusts his wrongs to Him will

be avenged; whoever entrusts his losses will be recompensed; whoever entrusts his griefs will be succoured; whoever entrusts his death will be restored to life.

§5

Like the poet, you may object:

Must I ever bear these vexations

But never avenge them?

Juvenal, *Satires*, I

Never do so, O my Christians, even if you are a hundred times, a thousand times vexed. If you are a true son of God, you will entrust your cause to Him, and suffer in silence. ‘Disaster will come to all who have ill-treated you and gloated over your fall’ (*Baruch* 4); and ‘anyone who does wrong will be repaid in kind’ (*Colossians* 3). You may say: I am ready to forgive my enemy, but I cannot forget the injury. If this is so, be assured that God will repay you in kind. ‘If anyone nurses anger against another, can one then demand compassion from the Lord? Showing no pity for someone like oneself, can one then plead for one’s own sins?’ (*Ecclesiasticus* 28) It is a most vain pretext of clemency to claim no desire for vengeance whilst choosing not to forget the injury: either give what you mean to give without reservation, or give up hoping to attain heaven thereby. You will recall the warning words of Christ: ‘That is how my Heavenly Father will deal with you unless each of you forgive your brother FROM YOUR HEART’ (*Matthew* 18). You may say: For my part I am quite prepared to forgive him, but the public office which I hold demands that no offence against my honour can go unpunished. I implore you, O Christians, not to stand on ceremony when our very salvation is at stake: this is but foolish dalliance with words. St Stephen, too, held public office, but was not on that account one to cast stones at his persecutors or seek thereby to defend his honour, crying sincerely from the heart: ‘*The Lord Jesus does not impute this sin unto them.*’ And so the crucified Jesus, not only as Son of Man but Son of God, tearfully implored His Father to pardon His enemies. There is no mortal creature, in no matter what high office, whose reputation would suffer through the forgiving of an injury, particularly if it concerns only himself: do not seek vengeance or remember the injuries of your citizens (*Leviticus* 19). Now you may say that you have been injured without cause. Had it not been causeless, it would have been no injury: where both are at fault, neither is injured. But why do I even

talk of causes? What cause did Joseph give to his brethren when he related his dream? As Governor of Egypt he passed over injuries in a magnanimous silence. But, you say, my injury cannot lightly be passed over. Why must you exaggerate its seriousness? If the offence were small, your reward for pardoning it would likewise be small. We can rise to a high degree of virtue only by suffering a high degree of offence. Hear the words of St Jerome: 'God is the sculptor, our enemies are the hammer and chisels with which He fashions us into saints' (*Commentary on Matthew*). Have your enemies ever stoned you as they did St Paul, or scourged and crucified you as they did Christ? But, you say, I am of noble birth and my enemy is a base peasant, a son of the earth. O Samian pot! Are you not of the same clay (albeit a little better) than your enemy? If once you yield to your desire for revenge, you are no son of nobility, but the slave of sin. 'Remember the last things, and stop hating' (*Ecclesiasticus* 28). You would like to forgive your enemy, you say, but cannot bring yourself to do so. You can – but I know that as long as you allow grudges to fester in your souls, all your thoughts will be bitter as wormwood, and your breast will teem with nettles, thorns and briars, most grievously stinging your lacerated conscience. You are aflame, you say, with the desire for revenge. Lose no time in extinguishing that flame, say I, lest by blocking your own path to Heaven you fan the flames of Hell where you will burn for all eternity. The gates of Heaven are the endurance of injury, and 'whoever exacts vengeance will experience the vengeance of the Lord' (*Ecclesiasticus* 28). You say that you cannot sleep and have no appetite for food or drink as long as you see a Mardochus³⁴ sitting safely before the palace gate and your enemy freely plotting your downfall. How splendidly we deceive ourselves to our own perdition! Ezekiel tells of certain soldiers 'who went down to Sheol fully armed, who had their swords laid under their heads' (*Ezekiel* 32). The sword – a new kind of pillow! There are those who sleep on no other kind, those who are so hungry for revenge that they are at rest only when fighting others with fists or swords. Thus it was that Cain, that early disciple of the Devil (as St Basil deems him), in causing his brother's destruction, sought to raise his own glory from the ruin of his brother's. In the event, quite the reverse occurred. Esau, Saul and Antiochus all tearfully implored for mercy, but their pleas went unheeded. Esau found no place for mercy no matter how much he wept for it (*Hebrews* 12). So too Saul and Antiochus were turned away from the altar of mercy to which they had fled, and justly so: they had never spared any of their own foes. He who has not been merciful to others shall be himself judged without mercy (*Ecclesiasticus* 28). King David compounded his sin with a dreadful lapse, steeping his adultery in blood, but as soon as he began to show signs of contrition and uttered those short words, '*I have sinned against the Lord*', he heard Nathan the Prophet say: 'The Lord, for His part, forgives your sin' (2 *Samuel* 12). How often did Antiochus confess that he had sinned, and with much

wailing implore for divine mercy, vowing offerings to the temple and promising to right the wrongs of his life, only to be repulsed? There is no surprise here: the Jewish king and the Assyrian tyrant behaved towards their enemies utterly differently. While David was inferior to no king in warfare and military triumphs, he was superior to them all in pardoning his enemies, because of all his crimes he judged revenge to be the least befitting to his dignity. He behaved towards his enemies more mercifully than did Antiochus towards his own citizens, when he scourged them with swords, flames, blood, vengeance and slaughter.

§6

Physicians do not commonly give up on their patients until they are almost at death's door; but there are some ailments so serious that the physician straight away declares that the patient is dying and that a grave must be dug for him. Similarly we are not to despair of the salvation of any man, however sinful he may be, so long as he breathes. But there is a certain disease in which the putrid innards swim in gall and the mind is beset by hatred and the yearning for revenge. Of a person thus afflicted St John the Apostle says: 'God will give life to this brother provided that [his] is not a deadly sin. There is sin that leads to death, and I am not saying you must pray about that' (1 *John* 5). They rarely recover who once set their hearts on revenge: sense is nowhere to be found, and bitterness everywhere (*Ecclesiasticus* 21). Although all the wise men cry out, all the prophets warn, all the angels exhort us to bury our recollection of injuries and join in friendship with our foes, we still obstinately refuse this reconciliation and push ahead for revenge. Moreover, the wisest of all wise men, the teacher of prophets, the king of the angels Himself comes with maximum authority and the most supreme power not to persuade us to this union, but compel us; not to suggest this reconciliation, but bind us to it by His law, and still we impudently refuse. Heed well the commandment of Christ the King, and heed too our rejection of it. Here stands Christ, commanding in His Father's name: 'Love your enemies' (*Matthew* 5, *Luke* 6). Here too stand his rebellious subjects, retorting: 'O Lord, You speak in vain and order us to no effect when You say "I speak to you who are Christians."' We side with the heathens, and do not listen to Christ. 'Love your enemies': hardly any obey. 'I say to you, resist not evil': we will be called spineless and cowardly. 'Pray for those who persecute and insult you': a cold and uncommon prayer. 'Be sons of your Father who is in Heaven': this status is bought at too high a price. 'Do good to those who hate you': this commandment is against nature, Lord; order us to do something easier. 'Forgive others and you will be forgiven': we cannot do it, O Lord, You know that we

cannot do it. So, we will not contain our anger, stay our hand or refrain from baring our teeth, and how is it possible for us to govern our thoughts? *'If you forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will forgive yours.'* We are ready to go to perdition with our enemies alongside us.

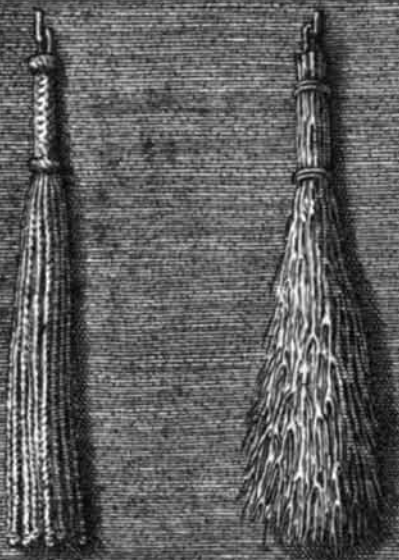
§7

O Christians, do you hate Heaven so much that you desire to rush headlong into Hell? Have you forgotten what you say every day: 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'? On this account of needing to love your enemies, you are putting the noose around your own neck whenever you ask God to forgive you for your own sins whilst saying to yourself: 'I will pardon none of my enemies, but take my revenge on all, punishing them with an implacable hatred. You, O Lord, may punish me in kind.' These are the words of the godless: the Predestined are of a different sort. Nothing can hurt them so much that they cease saying: 'Forgive them, O Father. Do not impute this sin to them. I pardon them, I forgive them, I have no thought of revenge.' These are the words of the Predestined. Before I conclude, however, I would ask all you who are reading these words but still harbouring a grudge towards your enemies: do you really believe in the truth of this? It is true, you will say: if it were not, Christ would be speaking untruths and deceptions. If then all is true (and most true it is) what is the cause of your impious defiance, your stubborn rejection of divine law, your contemptuous dismissal of the will of God? Christ tells you, and commands you, to pardon, forgive and love your enemies (not your friends), whoever they may be. Yet you remain impervious, and continue to hate your foes. Can you not forgive them, can you not find any love for those who have wished you ill? Do you care so little for Christ, for God, for Heaven and your eternal salvation? Can none of this wring from you one word, short but meant in earnest and from the heart: 'I pardon, I forgive, I beseech God to do the same if any have offended me'? Do you still stand like a statue, senseless, voiceless, never moving to forgiveness? Does that iron soul of yours still breathe with desire of vengeance? Do you still say: 'To Hell with my foes, and all other evils. May revenge, death and every ill beset my enemies'? Why does this hatred of your enemies endure? Do you not heed Christ's commandment? If you do not, then go with all those other Christians like you, by whichever road you choose, and you will not stray from the path leading you surely to the kingdom of the Devil; even with your eyes closed the path will take you unerringly to Hell. Your journey there is certain because truly you have lost your way; and certain too it is that he who will not cease hating his enemy cannot love God.

SIGNVM Xⁱ PRÆD. 210

Veniam tibi cito, et mouebo candelabrum
tuum de loco suo, nisi pœnitentiam egerit. *Apo.*

DETESTATIO PRÆTERITORVM PECCATORVM.



*Dum dolemus admissa, admittenda excludimus, et fit
quædam de condemnatione culpa, disciplina
innocentiæ. Ambros. L. 2. de pœnitent.*

TENTH SIGN OF PREDESTINATION: *SYMBOL THE TENTH*

Is a rod and scourge, signifying our *detestation of past sins*. St Augustine judges it a most abominable crime to glory and revel in the recollection of our past sins, when we should properly regard them with sorrow and endeavour to cleanse ourselves of them. The saint truly affirms: 'He that beats his breast but does not change his ways will aggravate, not alleviate, his sins' (*De libero arbitrio*, V). King David says of himself that 'my sins are always against me', and beseeches to be renewed in a clean spirit (*Psalms* 50). Blessed indeed are they who mourn for their sins and hold them in detestation: they grieve only because they are aggrieved no longer, and are afflicted because they do not afflict themselves enough. This is a true sadness in the eyes of God, leading to penance which produces lasting salvation (2 *Corinthians* 7). We are carefully to consider, as St Paul says, the phrase 'lasting salvation'. Many achieve a state of salvation through penance, but that salvation is, alas, not lasting. It is for this reason that Christ expressly warns us: 'Unless you repent you will all perish' (*Luke* 13). His meaning is that it is not enough to *do* penance; we must *have* it, that is, be committed to it. Neither are we allowed to undertake it for a certain period of time, only to stop: we must be firm in our purpose of perseverance. In the words of St Thomas Aquinas: 'True and sincere penance not only expiates our past sins, but also preserves us from future ones' (*Summa Theol.*, III, q. 84, VIII). He has no penance who does not also have the most steadfast resolve never to relapse into his former wicked ways.

§1

Having healed the paralysed man, Christ ordered him to take up his bed and walk (*John* 5, *Mark* 2). The occasions of sin are first to be looked out for, avoided and removed from our path, after which we may proceed to a most virtuous way of life. The Prodigal Son, almost starving with hunger, said: 'I will rise and go to my father.' Not only did he say this, he did it indeed, rising and going to his father. In our own case, however, we tend to forget the use of our hands and feet, and are active in word rather than deed. With powerful tongues but feeble hands we bend the bow but do not shoot the arrow; we make promises

which we do not honour. We are sorry when we fall into sin, but do not move to stop ourselves falling again. Just as those who wish to have their wounds healed but will not apply the remedy, we try to avoid sins but do nothing to avoid the torrent of inclinations which leads us to them. As we grow old we find more cause for procrastination and delay, and our life slips away in promises and good intentions until in the end it is extinguished without our having acted on any of them: death interrupts our decision-making and derides us for having made so many resolutions over the years to so little effect. Augustine was once such a man, but not for long: he did not put off until old age that which cannot be undertaken too young: 'I resolved in myself to do it shortly, and indeed shortly it will be done. I was pleased to have said this, and was on the point of carrying it out, although I did not. Yet I did not fully return to my old ways, merely standing to one side panting. I was restrained by my old friends, trifles of trifles and vanities of vanities, who shook me by my vestment of flesh and murmured: Will you forsake us?' (*Confessions*, VIII, 11) Forsake you he did, and threw off your yoke, and held in such detestation the ways of his old life that he never again returned to them.

§2

We often set out on a better course of life, but we do not persevere, and as we fail to make progress our life falls back into its old pattern. We doubtless have no shortage of pious impulses, holy thoughts, worthy intentions and pure resolutions; but as with the Athenians our best intentions are poorly carried out and not acted upon. We prescribe for ourselves a praiseworthy way of life, conducive to our salvation, but at the slightest hint of tedium or harm we are deflected from it. We make holy and steadfast resolutions, but when the flesh rebels and we sense the seductive Demon and others of his kind, our hand falters and we slip back into the vileness of our earlier life, not to be drawn away from what is forbidden, riding roughshod over our inconstant and all-too brief penance. Dear Christians, you have resolved to lead a most pure life, to avoid the occasion of sin, to avert your gaze from lustfulness and overcome your unruly flesh, and all this is right and proper. You refrain from sinful words and impure books: well and good. You resolve to cool your temper and moderate your wrath, to reject all enmity and envy of others: this is good. You are determined to hold your tongue when others are carried away, and to keep your peace when the words of others hurt you: all this is excellent. But how much more excellent it would be to remain true to our penance and persevere in this way of life! How many are there who, yesterday, could hold their tongue and control their lust, govern their anger and remain in

control of themselves, but who today lapse back into their former sinful ways, fall under the yoke of words and lustful deeds, become consumed with anger, and enslaved to their earlier life? Penance is not true penance if it is not firm and stable; rather it is a desultory whim. We are like those swordsmen who skilfully and cleverly brandish their weapons until they see the naked blade of their opponents, at which point they run away and expose themselves to the very wounds which they had sought to avoid. We are like those runners who are casually boastful at the start of a race, but break into a sweat as soon as they start running and have to give up before the race is half run. How often do we undertake matters of great consequence which begin well, and which we continue hopefully for a while, until by degrees we languish, start to flag and in the end fall! A tree is deceitful if it glories in blossom but does not yield the promised fruit. An architect has laid a useless foundation if he does not thereafter build upon it. What is the point of a mariner readying the yardarm, hoisting the sails and fitting the oars, if, as soon as he has left the coast for the open sea he returns straight back to the shore from which he departed? We are the same as that architect who lays a foundation without building anything upon it; the same as that orator who begins his speech but brings it to no conclusion; the same as that mariner who sets sail but at the first gust of wind returns to port. There is nothing we say more often than: 'I want to act, to change my ways', and yet nothing is acted upon and our ways remain unchanged. Straight from the Sacraments we set out bravely for our goal, but before we are halfway there we weary, falter and fall. Nothing remains of the promise we had made to ourselves to mend our ways, or the sacred vows we had uttered, because we are still so mindful of injuries done to us that we forget our resolutions. It is with good reason that Polybius³⁵ said: 'Man is accounted the wisest of all creatures, yet I consider him the most foolish.' Other animals are forever wary after they have been once harmed: the fox will not be caught twice in the same trap, the wolf will not fall into the same pit, the dog will avoid the cudgel. The only creature which is so unwary and unmindful that it falls into the same sins time and again is man.

§3

Through the prophet Isaiah, God makes the following complaint: 'You did not reflect on these matters or think about the future' (*Isaiah* 47: cf. *Jeremiah* 3). Penitence without correction is of no account, as St Bernard says. If one man builds a building and another knocks it down, what but their labour have they gained? (*Ecclesiastes* 34). What is gained by him who is baptized from death but touches the occasion of death once more? (Bernard, *Sermo 3 in nativitate*

Domini). True penitence must always come with correction: our gluttony mastered, our luxury curbed, our pride suppressed, so that we compel our bodies to serve holiness rather than the iniquity to which they were enslaved. All this we promise faithfully to do, and yet scarcely a day passes, scarcely an hour, before all our promises are forgotten and we fall into our former habits. What Isaiah deplors as a salubrious sadness, we rejoice in: 'Come, let me fetch wine; we will get drunk on strong drink' (*Isaiah* 56). We are like the Pharaoh who, seeing that the rain, hail and thunder had passed, relapsed into even greater sinfulness (*Exodus* 9). We too obtain remission for our sins only to fall into greater ones. How often do we seem as lambs in the morning, but lions in the evening – tigers in human form! How often do we seem angelic in the morning, but scarcely human by nightfall! We so often change our masks, and the one which we like best is so often the ugliest. Thus from vessels of glory we become, through our vicissitudes, vessels of ignominy. St John Chrysostom says: 'As sick people – unless they have lived orderly lives – do not benefit from a mere three or four days' temperance, so sinners will not profit from two or three days' correction: they must form a habit of virtue' (*Homilia* 3, *Ad populum*). While young chicks wander around the yard picking up flies and worms, the kite soaring above will suddenly swoop down and snatch one of them, sending the others running to hide under their mother's wing; but it is not long before they emerge to scratch around once again, utterly unmindful of the earlier danger, whereupon the watchful kite descends once more to take another; in disarray they flock again to their feathery haven and wait a while, before forgetting their fear and venturing forth again to encounter the very same danger until in the end their mother has hardly any offspring left. It is in a similar manner that death plays with us: here it plucks our neighbour from us, there a relative or a good friend, whose loss, being so near, gives us reason to sigh, tremble and vow to mend our ways. But how long do these tremors and laments last? Just a day or two, before we return to our former patterns; forgetting our tears and moans, we burst again into immoderate laughter and wantonness, seeking out devious paths to petty gains, relapsing into foresworn desires and repeated vices, steeping ourselves freely in the sins of our former life. We carry on in this evil certainty until our last tears are flowing and the talons of death tighten finally around our hearts. We only profit by what we have done, not what we wish to have done, and our greatest solace is to recall what it cost us most to achieve. But we do not sufficiently credit ourselves or others with this truth: today we detest our sins, tomorrow we commit the same or worse, playing thus with the Good Lord. As soon as we have washed one sin away, we commit the next one requiring as many more tears, forging another link in that chain which, as Isaiah says, menaces as much as it consoles (*Isaiah* 5). Woe to those whose sins lead to other sins as a chain pulls a

cart; we add sin to sin, the last greater than the first, and so our sins build, for we always incline to the worse. Of Antiochus Epiphanes³⁶ it was said that he was a good child but a bad youth, and a wicked man: so by degrees do we descend into the depths. Having been absolved of our sins through penance and confession, we are fervent in the first week, tepid in the second and cold in the third, as the spirit of goodness evaporates and we become as dead men. O men, fickle as the moon, who every month, every week, every day wax and wane in their excesses and defects! How many tides ebb and flow within the narrow breast of a Euripus³⁷? How often do healthy olives shrivel into bad fruit? Our fickleness and inconstancy make us more changeable in our human natures than fortune itself, which, when it ceases being good, only becomes gradually bad. 'The treacherous are ruined by their own perfidy' (*Proverbs* 11).

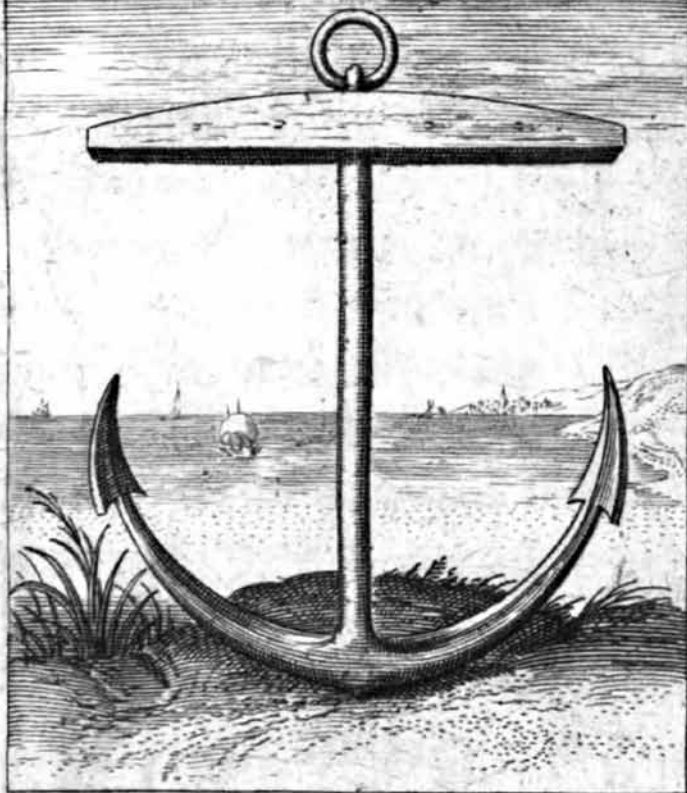
The paths of the just, by contrast, are as a splendid dawn which rises and grows into a perfect day (*Proverbs* 40). The Predestined have such a horror of sin that they avoid it at all costs, because they know the price of dallying with God; repenting of a sin one day and committing another the next, only in turn to repent of that. They do not forget how guilty they stood with God, nor how grievously they offended Him. This is how to obtain the full favour of God, who then forgets the offence as we remember it with sorrow.

SIGNVM XI^m. PRÆD. 231

Inclinaui cor meum, ad faciendas iustificationes tuas in æternū, propter retributionem

Ps. 118.

VOLVNTATIS IN BONVM PROPENSIO



Nihil offertur Deo ditius bonâ voluntate. voluntas autem bona est, nulli, quod pati non vis, facere; nulli, quod tibi iuste impendi desideras, denegare. Gregor. hom. 5. in Euang.

M

mihi

ELEVENTH SIGN OF PREDESTINATION: *SYMBOL THE ELEVENTH*

Is an anchor, representing the *propensity of our will to good*. This habit of the mind affirms itself when the soul resolves never to be defiled by committing sin, even if life itself is at stake. ‘Open to me the gates of saving justice,’ says the Royal Prophet, ‘I shall go in and thank the Lord’ (*Psalms* 118). The Gospel says: ‘If our own feelings do not condemn us, we can be fearless before God’ (1 *John* 3). Louis of Granada³⁸ asserts that the most reprehensible stigma of all is to fall easily into sin without any sense of sorrow. There is no greater sinner than him who has no serious wish to return to the good: the desire for goodness is a large part of goodness itself. The Predestined, desiring Heaven and never evil, do nothing but what is pleasing to God, and, with St Paul, cry out every hour and every moment: ‘O God, what would You have me do?’ (*cf. Acts* 9). There is nothing (they say) which for Your sake I will refuse to do, nothing too bitter or arduous, nothing too difficult or grievous which, with Your help and guidance, I cannot overcome. Where my ability falls short, my desire grows strong; where my feet cannot carry me, I shall fly on the wing of my thoughts, and as the sunflower turns to the sun I shall turn my will, O Lord, to Yours for evermore. In the first part of the Book it is written of me that I should do Your will (*Psalms* 39), and it has been my sole desire, O Lord, to keep Your law safe in my heart, my memory, my understanding and my will. St Bernard, keenest of all men to follow the Divine Will, writes: ‘Abject as I am, I possess nothing but this small thing, my will, and shall I not give it to Him who gave His own will wholly to me?’ (*Sermo in quadragesima*). It is equally proper that Divine Will should be the rule and anchor of our own human will. Epictetus³⁹ writes: ‘I have resolved to conform my will to the Divine Will. Does it desire me to be feverish? Even that, I wish. Am I to undertake anything? I desire to do it. Must I possess, or not possess? That too I desire. Must I die? I am ready. Who now can force me to act against my will, any more than they can force the will of God?’ (*Discourses* II, 26). Even a heathen dwelling in the blind night of ignorance could perceive these truths: how dreadful for Christians in the bright sunlight not to see as much. ‘Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.’ Therefore, ‘Stand to your arms, acquit yourselves bravely, in the morning be ready to fight these gentiles

massed against us to destroy us and our sanctuary [...] Whatever be the will of Heaven, He will perform it.' (1 *Maccabees* 3).

§1

The city clocks are all set by the principal clock; why then should the will of every man, like a little clock, not be set by that great celestial timepiece, the will of God? As the divine will shall be in Heaven, so let it be. It is extraordinary, how gratifying this act is to God. The Lord congratulated with Himself, as for some good deed: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will perform my entire will' (*Acts* 13). God had searched long and hard for such a man, with a mind and predisposition to do nothing other than His own will in all things. Having found him, like a man overjoyed our most bountiful Father cried out: 'I have found one who will perform my entire will.' This was why the Son of God was so dutiful in performing His Father's will: 'I have come from Heaven, not to do my own will, but to do the will of Him who sent me' (*John* 6). Those who not only fail to heed a call, but even refuse to hear a command have drifted very far from the rule of this good and straightforward will. 'The wise fears evil and avoids it, the fool is insolent and conceited' (*Proverbs* 14). Thus say the Scriptures: '[the adulteress] eats, then wipes her mouth and says: "I have done nothing wrong!"' (*Proverbs* 30). Those who are of this mind laugh even as they give their souls to the Devil: they have forfeited Heaven, and do not even feel their punishment, accounting the loss a light one.

§2

By contrast, those Predestined to Heaven lay so sure a foundation of good in their souls that they shrink from all evil and recoil from the slightest shadow of sin. Never content to do anything that may displease God, they resolve to do only what is pleasing to Him, even though the world itself may not be pleased by them. All their thoughts and words are put to this end, and we must not doubt that from their inflamed wills they will exclaim, more devoutly still than Epictetus: O my God, my love, let my will never be apart from Your own: my will is Yours, or rather, I no longer have command of my will, since all I have is Yours. I must follow Your will, since it is all I possess. I neither do, nor desire to do anything, O Lord, but that which pleases You. Is it your pleasure that I should fall ill? So be it. That I should be poor? So be it. That I should be afflicted with pain? So be it. Would You have me suffer slights and injuries? Then I am

resolved to be condemned and despised, and welcome this no matter how grievously I may feel it. Would You deprive me of solace? So be it. Would You visit my soul with anguish? So be it: I am ready to undergo this even if it should last until the end of time. Would You deprive me of that which I most love? It is difficult to be parted from what we love, but this too I am ready to undergo for You. Would You have me die? Of all difficult things this is the most difficult, and yet I would not refuse to die a hundred times over if I were to expire in the embrace of Your most holy will. And if this were a violent death? I would desire that too, however my inclination may oppose it. Would You include me among the blessed in Heaven? I would wish it, O Lord, how I would wish it. Would You send me down to Hell? Ah! Sweet Jesus, if You had desired this, it would surely have come to pass, for I have deserved it; but You did not so desire, having shed Your blood to prevent it. If it were possible (and it is not) that I should have the capability to oppose Your will, and choose whether to be blessed in Heaven or damned in Hell (following Your will), it would be better for me to be damned than leave Your will unfulfilled. But, O good Lord, I know that You do not desire me to die, because You suffered Your son to do so in order that I should not. I beseech You, therefore, O heavenly Father, that through the most bitter death of that son, You keep me from eternal death. Behold the wounds, and the blood which for my sake was shed, when to spare Your servant You would not spare Your son. O immortal King, I am Your humblest servant, ready to cleave to Your slightest desire: it is a beautiful thing for me to accede to whatever Your will should wish. 'Let [the people] thank the Lord for His faithful love, for His wonders for the children of Adam!' (*Psalms* 107). The King of Heaven particularly loves those servants of His who observe with a keen gaze His holy will, making it a law for themselves and proclaiming with good cheer: 'Nothing is [...] sweeter than adherence to the Lord's commandments' (*Ecclesiasticus* 23).

§3

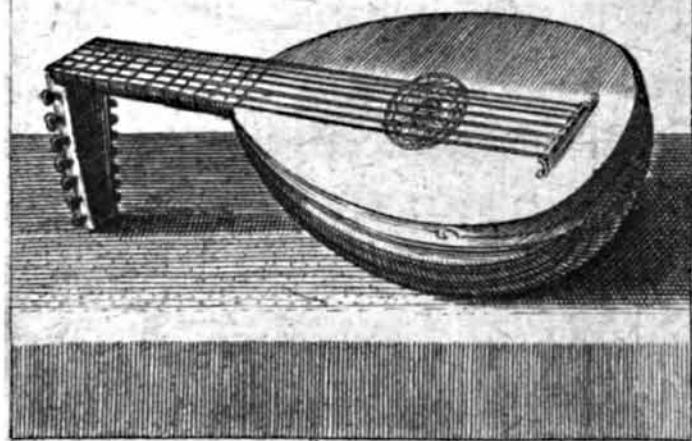
The Greeks set great store by their noble maxim: moderation in all things. You, O Lord, have nonetheless ordained that great store should be set by Your own commandments (*Psalms* 118). God would have his servants so ready for every instruction and prepared for every least desire of His that not a day should pass, not even the most burdensome of days, without their heartfelt cry: as God wishes, so be it. By this means the will of virtuous men becomes as the will of God, and they are steadfast in their resolve never to desire anything which may displease the Lord. In consequence they obtain all that they desire, since they desire nothing other than to conform to the will of God. They know the truth

of what St Jerome wrote to Paula on the death of her daughter Blaesilla⁴⁰: God is good, and good as He is, all that He ordains must likewise be good. No man of good will can take amiss anything which proceeds from so good a God. Are they healthy? They give thanks for it to their maker. Are they sick? In this too they accede to their Lord's will and praise Him. Are they bereaved of those closest to them? They may bewail what has happened, but knowing that it pleases God, they bear their loss with an even heart. Is an only child taken from them? This is hard, but must be borne: He who gave them their child has now taken it back to Himself. Are they overwhelmed by poverty, or some more grievous affliction, exposing them to contempt and scorn, lacerated by a wave of injuries? In spite of all this they will say no words but these: *God has done as it has pleased Him, and has well done, wherefore be He praised*. God be blessed for eternity. Those who are faithful to this holy goodwill, staying firm as an anchor, may expect their ultimate reward, passing briefly meanwhile over any misfortune which will come in time to a better end.

SIGNVM XII^{te} PRÆD. 246

Sub te erit appetitus eius, et tu
dominaberis illius. Genes. 4.

MODERATIO AFFECTVVM



Discretione magni moderamini, carnis cura frenanda est, ne quasi domina animum vincat, sed subacta mentis dominio, quasi ancilla famuletur.

Greg. I. 9. mor. C. 40.

pugnan-

TWELFTH SIGN OF PREDESTINATION: *SYMBOL THE TWELFTH*

Is a lute, by which is conveyed the *moderation of our passions*, or *victory over temptations*. The people of Christ mortified their flesh with its vices and carnal appetites, as St Paul makes clear (*Galatians* 5). St Bernard elegantly interprets Christ's invitation: let those who would follow me deny themselves; let those who would love me despise themselves; let those who would fulfil my will learn to conquer their own (*Sermo de S. Andréâ*). That which most fatigues us in the fight, most crowns us in the victory. The only way to become masters of our lives is by the daily extermination of our passions: as long as they live, our reason is either blind or dead. Whence the entreaty of the most holy King David: 'Open my eyes, and I shall fix my gaze on the wonders of Your law' (*Psalms* 119). I know, O Lord, that there are great and sublime secrets contained in Your law, but I am only a man, burdened with flesh and its sundry obnoxious passions, and I am well aware how many of them torment and blind my mind. Only Your love can open my eyes and dispel the fog of passions which obscures my sight. Of these passions, Seneca rightly says: 'It is easier to prevent them in the beginning than attempt to moderate their violence later. Just as a falling body is unable to arrest its descent by willpower alone, its irrevocable fall depriving it of any possibility of choice, so a heart plunging into anger, love or any other passion cannot easily resist its violent accession, since it is the nature of vice to continue unchecked' (*Epistles* 85 & 116). It is best to root out the seeds of these malignant passions. We must confront our enemies as they gather at our doors, for if they enter they will give their captives no quarter. 'Better an equable person than a hero, someone with self-mastery than one who takes a city' (*Proverbs* 16).

§1

As St Augustine says, blessed are they in themselves who control the motions of their mind and submit them all to reason; blessed are those who, subduing the concupiscence of the flesh, become the Kingdom of God, in which nothing is in disarray, in which the mind exercises dominion over the bodily senses, which as mere servants cannot resist it (*De sermone Domini in monte*, I, 2).

This is the peace proclaimed by the angels at Christ's nativity – but which none may obtain but by arms and warfare. Why else would God have delivered the Commandments to Moses to the sound of warlike trumpets (*Exodus* 19)? We might have expected sweet and soothing music to chime better with the rites of the Church to which those laws referred; we might have said that trumpets suited the military camp better than the church. But so it is, my dear Christians, that we are summoned to the field of battle, into the conflict, by the Lawmaker; and no-one can truly observe His laws who refuses to fight against those who impugn them. No-one can overcome their flesh by indulging it, and no-one can defeat the temptations of the Devil or the blandishments of the turbulent world without a battle. We must treat every passion as a foe, set against us by the adversaries of Divine Law, and resist accordingly. He who is offended by his crimes yet continues to indulge his passions is merely cutting the branches from an evil tree whilst feeding its roots: the branches grow back. St John Chrysostom, expounding on Christ's statement that a man who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart, reminds us that Christ removes not only the disease, but the root of the disease too. The root of adultery is shameless concupiscence, and He condemns therefore not only adultery but its mother – concupiscence. In like manner He prohibits not only murder but the anger which leads to it, and the insulting language which foment the anger. Love and anger are two of the most violent passions, and neither can be reined in without great effort. Mildness and gentle persuasion are of no use; and anger in particular does not merely disturb the mind like other vices so much as steal headlong away with it. No-one would wish to injure their enemy on condition that they left their hand behind in the wound, unable to withdraw it, but this is the case with anger, leading us so far on that we cannot pull back. Anger is never content with any one crime, and is not appeased until he who is destined to receive its thunderbolt is left with a fatal wound. An angry man is like the stone called *pyrite*, which sparks into flame wherever it is struck with a flint. Such a man 'provokes disputes, someone in a rage commits all sorts of sins' (*Proverbs* 29). Anger and wrath are hateful things (*Ecclesiasticus* 27), and scarcely any plague has cost mankind quite so dear, for 'Resentment kills the senseless, and anger brings death to the fool' (*Job* 5). 'Therefore, dear brothers,' says St Augustine, 'I beseech you not to call such a plague down on ourselves; the soul's sickness, the night of reason, the estrangement from God, the oblivion of friendship, the cause of wars, the plenitude of calamity, the worst of devils, all the more to be avoided, the more it worms its way into our daily lives' (*City of God*, IV, 6). 'This passion,' writes Seneca, 'generates heat in all sorts of persons, as much from love as from hatred, as much from serious matters as from games and jokes; and we should be less concerned with what causes it than with whose soul

it strikes. It matters less how great the fire is than where it is kindled, since any dry thing will nourish a spark into a raging blaze' (*Epistles*, 18). But, as he says elsewhere, there is nothing so hard and difficult that the mind of man cannot overcome it, and there are no passions so wild and headstrong that discipline cannot tame them (*De irâ*, II, 12): let the mind command it, and it shall be done. How needful it is, then, to be delivered from such great evils as anger, and the frenzy, rage, cruelty, wrath and other passions which accompany it.

§2

What that wise Roman said of Anger, we may also apply to those other notorious furies, Pride and Envy, as well as their sisters in sin, Lust and Greed, and the whole host of vicious passions. What happiness it would be to free ourselves from these principal sins, and compose our souls to blessed tranquillity, to harmony and the concordance of our cupidities! Blessed is he, therefore, who least indulges his passions, who least wishes to be the servant of his vices, and who builds a kingdom of reason by crucifying his passions. Even galley-slaves are allowed some time, however brief, to pause and rest their limbs; those who are the slaves of passion never enjoy any respite, for their minds are always in a turmoil stirred by restless thoughts. '[Your ancestors] followed other gods, and served and worshiped them' (*Jeremiah* 16). Similarly the Ecclesiastic advises us: 'Do not be governed by your passions, restrain your desires' (*Ecclesiastes* 18). A headstrong horse must be reined, a sluggish one spurred, and thus we are to manage our passions: some encouraged while the rest mostly to be restrained. No-one can hate himself as much as one who is so lost in self-love, so dissolved in voluptuousness that he can neither control himself nor deny himself anything. Let such as these consider what the Apostle foretells of them: 'if by the Spirit you put to death the habits originating in the body, you will have life' (*Romans* 8). No greater empire can be had than the self over which one has mastery, nor is there any greater misery than to be a slave to one's passions. No triumph is more glittering than the victory we achieve over ourselves: the struggle is brief, the victory glorious, the reward eternal. The man who refuses to serve his passions will overcome them, but as St Ambrose says, one who is cowed by fear, ensnared by pleasure, seduced by desire, exasperated by offence, dejected by sadness is a slave to his passions (*De Iacob. et vitâ beatâ*, II). There is no viler servitude, according to Seneca, than that which is undertaken voluntarily, one man serving lust, another avarice, another ambition (*Epistles*, 47). For St Augustine, a good man (even a servant) is free, whereas a bad man (even a king) is a slave – and not to an individual, but (which is worse) to as many masters as he has vices. Mankind has as many desires as it has

faces and outward appearances, and just as even among men of the same kind there is great diversity, so too there is a panoply of passions, and not everyone is equally in thrall to them. Behold here, one burning in the flames of lust, another manacled in gold, a third choked by envy, another drinking himself to ruin, others going the same way by idling or gambling. None of these will ever be persuaded that their perdition proceeds from their pleasure – as if it were not possible equally to drown in wine as in water. St Gregory puts it well when he says: 'A reprobate mind delights in its pleasures, but that which is now sweet will, to its eternal pain, turn bitter' (*Commentary on 1 Kings*, IV, 4). O wretch! You have been deceived by appearances (*Daniel* 13), lust has perverted your heart, and you long with thwarted thirst for fleeting waters. What happiness can a man gain from his lust, which, according to St Ambrose, burns worse than a fever, more grievously inflames, and then casts him down? When the furore has passed, the eyes of his conscience are opened, and he is consumed with shame at his sinful deed. He then stands in fear before God, and would hide his guilty head, but cannot: the deformity is conspicuous, all secrets are laid bare before God, and the thought of divine justice strikes terror into his heart. What is the craving for wealth but a spur to every kind of wickedness, which is provoked rather than assuaged by the attainment of its goal, which torments the mind no less in soliciting than in enjoying its desires? Whereas all other vices grow old as man grows old, avarice alone remains youthful. Hatred and envy are very stubborn ills, which, unless they are strangled at birth, will prove harder to overcome than other passions. Those who are the slaves of gluttony have a most baleful mistress, who grows more demanding the more she is served; and owing to her kinship with lasciviousness, the more she is indulged, the more damage is done to purity. Who then is there, richly deserving of our praise, who would not glory with [Sarah in the Book of] Tobit in saying: 'O Lord, You know that I have remained pure; no man has touched me' (*Tobit* 3)? Such a one is indeed like a lute, with all its strings tuned in harmony.

§3

Having been commanded by God to kill King Agag, Saul only imprisoned him (*1 Kings* 15), and so it is with our passions: as long as they are not blatant we pay them no heed, however insidiously they work within us. It is a vicious pity to imprison what should be condemned to die, and why should we spare a concealed enemy, only to equip him with arms against us in open warfare? Those vices which were at first the product of chance and error gradually become second nature, until they impose upon us a necessity of sinning, and assailed by a

host of domestic foes we cry out: 'I cannot overcome my passions, I would rather die than be deprived of my pleasures!' In this way our errors become habits, and instead of nipping our malign passions in the bud, we allow them to grow until we behold ourselves overgrown with forests and mighty thickets from which it is beyond our powers to extricate ourselves. But even then we are not to despair, for one custom may be driven out by a better one – and the more precious our crown, the harder the fight will be. With the good God willing us to vanquish, victory is certain. Let Moses with his rod check the waves of the sea, and God will for the rest ensure that the whole tribe of Israel shall pass while the whole tribe of Egypt shall be engulfed (*Exodus* 14). Let us resolve to exterminate the Amorites and Canaanites, and take up arms against them, bringing them war such as they have never known before (*Judges* 3). Man's life is nothing but war on earth (*Job* 7). Let no-one consider himself trusted, since none has a more dangerous and treacherous enemy than himself: no safe haven can be reached, no security achieved, and there will be no end to the use of his weapons until the grave seals them up. He who would be victorious over these enemies must be ever armed and on guard against them. As St Cyprian beautifully writes: 'There is no greater pleasure than in subduing our pleasure, and no greater victory than that which we achieve over our desires; for he who defeats his enemy is only stronger than another man, but he who vanquishes his lusts is stronger than himself' (*De bono pudicitiae*). A true lutenist never stops adjusting the strings until he has brought them harmoniously in tune; so too the Predestined seek to reconcile their passions until they are in peaceful harmony with religion. If we are to believe Plato, the body is a lute, and the soul a lutenist, who tunes one string, then another: it moderates the eyes, then the tongue; now the ears, now the hands. When lust or impatience rise too high, it brings them back down to the right pitch. He was a skilled musician indeed who said: 'I punish my body and bring it under control' (1 *Corinthians* 9). The principal care of the Predestined one is to examine daily the instrument of his passions, fighting his anger, suppressing his envy, stirring himself from sloth, moderating his joy and mitigating his sadness. He is forever tuning the strings, tightening some and loosening others, until all agree in harmony. The Predestined one indulges none of his passions and favours no-one less than himself, he reprehends his desires and suffers none of them to go unpunished. It is, then, a true sign of predestination that those who are of Christ should crucify their flesh, with all its vices and unholy lusts.

CROWN

Of the Signs of Predestination

&

The Scarcity of the Predestined

To crown what has been said, let us now turn to the mellifluous Doctor, St Bernard, who writes: ‘The Lord knows who are His own, and He alone knows whom He has elected from the beginning. No man can tell whether he is worthy of love or hate. Since it is certain that we have no certainty, would it not be much to our advantage to discern some sign of our election? Can our spirit ever be at rest, having no proof of this *predestination*? Any account which does present the proof of our salvation must, therefore, be a true one, and worthy of full acceptance. Such words will give comfort to the elect, and will deprive the reprobate of any excuse; for once the signs of life are made manifest, anyone who ignores them must be sure that he has received his soul in vain, caring little for that longed-for land’ (*Sermons*, 2, *Octave Day of Easter*). A man has no-one but himself to blame, if he cannot perceive within himself any sign of *predestination*: it is not randomly that God, ‘who can read everyone’s heart’ (*Acts* 15), has predestined anyone to Heaven or Hell. In *foreseeing the merits of all*, He decrees either reward or punishment. As St Prosper⁴¹ most justly writes: ‘It is not necessary that a man should perish because he is not predestined; rather he is not predestined because it was foreseen that by his own wilful perversity he would perish’ (*Responses ad capitula objectionum Gallorum*, III). St Augustine states that God hated Esau the sinner, not Esau the man (*De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, I, 2), since God hates nothing in man but sin. It is only sin, as he says, which obstructs the path to Heaven (*Epistles*, 105). We all of us aspire to one single goal, but what diverse paths we take, rushing off course and perishing in the process! The path of life is narrow, that path of perdition pleasant, rosy and wide: one is a steep cliff, the other slides gently into a valley. *Easy is the descent into hell*. Truth cries out, exhorting and admonishing us: ‘Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to destruction is wide and spacious, and many take it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it’ (*Matthew* 7). And again it is instilled in us: ‘Try your hardest to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed’ (*Luke* 13). The path is narrow indeed, and we are to travel it alone and without company. Each of us is to give account to God only of himself, each is to

bear his own burden, each is to receive his reward according to his merits (*Romans* 12, *Galatians* 6, 1 *Corinthians* 3). This is what led Christ to utter those sorrowful words: 'Many are invited, but not all are chosen' (*Matthew* 22). Few are chosen, indeed. How many must have been awakened, as if by a thunderbolt, from the trance of their sinful lives, by this one word: *few*! How many have fled the cities for caves or dreadful deserts, shunning human society! How many hundreds and thousands of martyrs has it driven to scaffolds, racks, burning stakes, crosses, the jaws of beasts and the hands of torturers! All of them speak with one voice: 'It is easy for us to die, we who will live again among those FEW ELECT: put your swords at our throats, for we are numbered among those FEW but BLESSED.' Which of them would lack the courage to say these words? 'If I were hung on a hundred crosses, I would not seek to escape from a single one; if I had a hundred necks I would stretch them all out, not excepting a single one; it would be my pleasure to die a hundred times, and I would consider my torments as comforts, since I am to be admitted to that society of the FEW in Paradise.' As the martyr St Ignatius so magnanimously wrote: '*Let me suffer the fire, the cross, the wild beasts and all the torments the Devil can conjure, as long as I may enjoy the company of Christ.*' How many has the thunder of our Lord's speech, this one word – FEW – recalled from an impure life in the meadows of luxury to the house of mourning and penitence! They have preferred to be saved with the few rather than perish with the many, for those who perish in company perish no less. We have had warnings in every age about the scarcity of saved souls. This was the sole theme of the preaching of Noah, that 'preacher of uprightness' (as the Apostle Peter calls him: 2 *Peter* 2), for a century and more before the flood, yet men were so stubborn in their wicked ways that of all the souls then living, only eight were saved in the wooden prison or ark, the impious Cain being one of that select company (*Genesis* 7). It is as rare to find a society of good men without an admixture of bad, as it is to find a fragrant rose without thorns. At the point of destroying the land of Sodom, God was at the behest of Abraham ready to stay His hand provided that ten just men could be found among the entire population, and yet that harvest of good men proved barren (*Genesis* 18). The angels advised Lot to 'flee for your life!' (*Genesis* 19), and so great was the ensuing conflagration that when the two flourishing cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were engulfed, only three men were saved in those places, which have survived to this day as a sign of the wrath of God. The scarcity of the saved is just as clearly expressed by that passage (*Exodus* 12) which relates how Moses led 600,000 soldiers out of Egypt, together with women and children and miscellaneous common people without number, and how only two of that vast crowd arrived in the fertile promised land, the rest lying buried in a vast desert grave containing so many thousands. As for the Tyrant of Egypt who went in

pursuit of the people to bring them back under his yoke, he and all his army were swallowed by the Red Sea (*Exodus* 14). How many thousands of living souls were buried in that vast liquid sepulchre! Who then does not fear You, O Lord? (*Exodus* 32). Moreover, on account of the people's idolatry Moses commanded all those who were of God join with him (*Jeremiah* 10), and that day they slew 23,000 men: the grievous consequence of an act of idolatry, showing how much God detests a single sin. In the same way Joshua, having taken by a ruse the city of Jericho, put all its inhabitants and their beasts to the flame and the sword, so that the city was like a cadaver on a funeral pyre, reduced completely to ashes, with only a single house surviving the mighty conflagration (*Joshua* 2 & 6). When, too, Gideon led his campaign against the Midianites, he chose only 300 troops to go to battle, out of 32,000, turning all the rest away (*Judges* 7 & 20). The Lord has no concern for numbers, only for the good; and the path to Hell is not so long that in a single breath we may not commit a single sin and forfeit the Divine Majesty, plunging into eternal punishment. For one libidinous act 40,000 Hebrews and 50,600 of the Tribe of Benjamin were slain. And with the loss of how many thousand souls did that Tribe of Benjamin pay when they looked sinfully upon the Ark of God with prying eyes? (1 *Kings* 6) The great scarcity of the Predestined is no less clearly to be seen in the sacred history of the Kings. When Absalom was leading an army of rebels against his father the king, a messenger ran to King David and announced that: 'the men of Israel have shifted their allegiance to Absalom' (2 *Samuel* 15). When Sheba roused a furious multitude against the king, bad tidings once again reached David: 'all the men of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba son of Bichri' (2 *Samuel* 20). Behold the world, and you will say as much. Christ, another David, shows us the way by His spilled blood, His footsteps, His crown of thorns, His shoulders bearing the infamous burden of the Cross, His dying eyes mingling blood with tears, thus ascending Calvary and inviting us to follow Him. But how few there are, alas, who do follow Him, who are ready to be crucified with Him in whatever way they may. We may safely say that the whole world is steeped in evil, that with all its heart it follows not Sheba but Satan, leaving Christ alone on Golgotha. To this we may apply that other passage (2 *Samuel* 24) in which King David, exulting in his power to order a census, causes 70,000 souls to be consumed by plague. All these were shadows of the future, a prologue to those sermons in which Christ was to speak of the scarcity of the Predestined. If we consider the number of Jews living from the time of Abraham to the last day of the world as recorded in the Apocalypse, we find that 144,000 of them, scarcely one thousandth part of the whole, can be numbered among the Predestined. And as with the Hebrews, so too with all other races of men in due proportion, for what Christ predicted – that few shall walk in the narrow path of life – refers not only

to the Jews but all others also (*Matthew 7 & Luke 13*): He directs His words to all when He says 'it is a narrow gate [...] and only a few find it.' The Prophets everywhere proclaim the truth of this affirmation. Isaiah reminds us that Hell has spread its soul and opened wide its mouth, because impiety like a fire embraces all. It shall consume the thorn and briar, the dense grove shall be engulfed, and the pride of the smoke shall coil forth. Thorns and briars shall overcome the universal earth (*Isaiah 5 & 9*). Where indeed shall you not find the briars of Lust? (*Isaiah 24*) Where shall you not find the thorny thickets of desire – not for Heaven but for wealth? Truly, the earth is corrupted by its inhabitants, who have transgressed the laws, altered what is right, and violated an eternal treaty. Everyone treads his own path, each one desiring only what is most new (*Isaiah 24 & 56*). In no less mournful tones does [the Lord in the Book of] Jeremiah lament this scarcity of the good: 'Rove the streets of Jerusalem, now look and enquire, see in her squares if you can find an individual, one individual who does right and seeks the truth' (*Jeremiah 5*). The people are 'peddlers of slander, hard as bronze and iron, all agents of corruption' (*Jeremiah 6*). Not only the rich, but (what is more to be wondered at) the poor too are acquainted with pride and wantonness. Poverty is now in league with vice, and a universal corruption is abroad: bronze and iron, silver and other precious metals. Of the origin of all this evil, the Prophet says: 'I have listened attentively: [...] Not one repents of wickedness, saying "What have I done?" Each one keeps returning to the course like a horse charging into battle' (*Jeremiah 8*). This is just as true of our own times. Woe to the earth, woe to mankind: 'the country is full of adulterers' (*Jeremiah 23*). No less does Micah lament this dearth of virtue: 'How wretched I am [...] not a single cluster to eat [...] The faithful have vanished from the land, there is no-one honest left' (*Micah 7*). When he thought about this King David wept openly, the tears freely flowing from his eyes: God looked down from Heaven on the sons of men to see if any of them were mindful of seeking the Lord. All shunned Him, were devoid of worth, not one of them doing any good, not a single one (*cf. Psalms 13 & 52*). Whoever considers these lamentable days of ours, and the many ways in which our morals have been perverted, cannot but be of one mind with the Royal Prophet, and conclude that our age most resembles that of Noah, 'For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing till the Flood came and swept them all away' (*Matthew 24*). One would imagine that, in our time, Virtue were wholly banished from the earth, and that if anyone were to allow her to take up residence it would be only fleetingly, as a courtesy to a passing stranger, with no possibility of a permanent home. Vice is lord and master of so many that it has lost count of its kingdoms, so wide is its reign. Masked injustice and hidden

envy go boldly about their business here, as most audaciously does the obscene sin of Lust, hated by Heaven. The numbers of the good being reduced to so few, to so many myriads of evil, we may agree with Bias of Priene that rare in number are the good, but many are the wicked. St Ambrose, too, proclaims that in comparison with the sinful, the number of the saved is small. Everywhere you shall find multitudes of sinners, hordes of them going their own way. It may be truly said that the ways of Sion lament, while the paths of Babylon laugh (*cf. Lamentations* 1). Anyone who casts his mind's eye over the road to Hell down which he is hurtling will see that it is thronged with crowds of travellers, pushing and shoving each other along the path to hellfire as if they were all on their way to a wedding feast. The road to vice is not so much gently inclined as precipitous. The road leading to virtue, however, is an uphill struggle, and its travellers are rare and for the most part hidden in shadow. As Isaiah presaged in that complaint of his: 'It is as at the beating of the olive trees, as at the gleaning of the grapes when the grape harvest is over' (*Isaiah* 24). The scarcity of the good may be reckoned by the few olives and grapes which remain to be picked after the rest have been gathered, and the excessiveness of evil by the copious crop that has already been gleaned. 'There is no loyalty,' says Hosea, 'no faithful love, no knowledge of God in the country, only perjury and lying, murder, theft, adultery and violence, bloodshed after bloodshed' (*Hosea* 4). This paucity of the good is but all too apparent, which the Prophets deplore. After the tears of the Prophets, the Apostles of the New Testament similarly bewail the scarcity of the blessed. As St John affirms, 'the whole world is in the power of the Evil One' (*1 John* 5), and as St Peter asks: 'If it is hard for the upright to be saved, what will happen to the wicked and to sinners?' (*1 Peter* 4). St Paul laments that: 'all want to work for themselves, not for Jesus' (*Philippians* 2). Christ Himself affirms that 'the Kingdom of Heaven has been subjected to violence and the violent are taking it by storm' (*Matthew* 11). He does not avoid warnings in the meantime: 'Alas for you who are rich: you are having your consolation now. Alas for you who have plenty to eat now: you shall go hungry. Alas for you who are laughing now: you shall mourn and weep' (*Luke* 6). St Luke sets this out for those who have ears to listen and eyes to see, relating how part of the good seed lies withering among the stones, another part lies choking amid thorns and briars, a third part lies on the road where it is trodden underfoot, and scarcely a fourth part is nourished by good soil (*Luke* 8). Of ten lepers cured by Jesus, only one returned to give thanks to Him (*Luke* 17). Of those invited to the feast, every last one found a reason for excusing himself (*Luke* 14). As often as the Probatic Pool⁴² was stirred, only one sick man had himself restored to health (*John* 5). Of the Hebrew senators, only Nicodemus made himself available to speak to Christ (*John* 7). Of so many wealthy and covetous citizens of Jericho, of so many richly laden camels, only

Zachaeus (as Bede relates: *In evangelium Lucae*, V, 77) threw the burden from his bent back, and restoring all that he had unjustly obtained, sought entry by the narrow door. It is related that Mary Magdalene alone from her sinful life was led to an innocent one (*Luke* 19). When St Paul preached at Philippi, a town in Macedonia, there were many listeners but almost no-one ready to act on what they heard: only Lydia heeded his Christian message (*Acts* 16). On another occasion when Paul spoke of Christ in Athens, to an audience that was not only sizeable but learned, only a few including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman called Damaris paid any attention, the rest mostly mocking his words (*Acts* 17). At that famous assembly of 72 magistrates, only one or two were to be found who were not after Christ's blood (*Luke* 23). Before the Cross of the Lord itself there were many spectators, but few who would love or imitate Him. Today there is an abundance of sermons, but very few who listen to them are willing to mend their ways as a result: vices are condemned, but not expunged. Men are, indeed, so unwilling to expunge them that they do not even want it mentioned. *Many are invited, but not all are chosen*: all too few, alas. As St Gregory says, there are many who attach themselves to faith, but few who profit from it to attain the Kingdom of Heaven (*Homilies on the Gospels*, 19). Just as you shall find more straw than corn upon the floor, more leaves than fruit upon the trees, more vine-shoots than grapes, more thorns than roses, more flints than gemstones, so too the number chosen by Divine Providence for blessedness is small, as against the multitudes of the wicked. How true was the prophecy of Jeremiah: '*The whole country has been devastated and no-one takes it to heart*' (*Jeremiah* 12). This is so because our thoughts are ephemeral, never able to affix themselves for long to anything that is good or honest. It explains why we have little understanding of Hell, and merely a lukewarm or inconstant desire for Heaven. The accusation may be levelled against even Christians that they *pay no heed to the desired land* (*Psalms* 105). But what could be more desirable than Heaven? We so rarely entertain the idea of the Kingdom of Heaven that we either regard it as a trivial thing or yearn very half-heartedly for it. The Devil grows so much in hope and strength thereby, that as Job says: 'If the river overflows, he does not worry: Jordan might come up to his mouth, but he would not care' (*Job* 40). That most patient of men then says: 'If I prove myself upright, His mouth may condemn me, even if I am innocent, He may pronounce me perverse' (*Job* 9). This was the cause of St Hilarion's fear of dying (as recounted by St Jerome: *Vita S. Hilarionis*, 38) and having to stand before the tribunal of Christ's justice. There was only a little heat remaining in his body, and excepting his senses, no signs of life, when Hilarion lifted his eyes and said: 'Go forth, what are you afraid of? Go forth, my soul, why are you doubtful? You have served Christ these 70 years, and are afraid to die?' No, he was afraid not of dying, but

of that imminent judgment which he was about to undergo. While those saints feared for their salvation, consider now, O my Christians, how safe you are in your pleasures, heaping up gold and silver, hurting each other with envy and hate, hunting for honours and touting for glory, indulging your silly humour, believing that God allotted the earth which you inhabit for the liberal use of the sons of men, while the Heavens are governed by their Lord. Feel free, then, to see, do and think anything which takes your fancy, let your desires run free, treat as lawful anything you want, leave no bodily delight unindulged, live at your ease, follow the whims of your heart, let your gaze lead you where it will. But be assured that for all this you will be called to account before God; and that even if a man should live for many years to his heart's content, he must be minded of the dismal times which, when they come, will argue that all the past is vanity (*Ecclesiasticus* 11). 'Never allow your choice or calling to waver; then there will be no danger of your stumbling' (2 *Peter* 1).

You have already heard what the signs of Divine Predestination mean, to wit: 1 – Love not only your friends but your enemies. 2 – Relieve the poor, not only with the alms you give, but with the mercy of your heart. 3 – Withstand all adversity: if it is the will of God, then praise Him and abide in patience. 4 – Set no store, for the sake of Heaven, by the goods which luck brings you. 5 & 6 – Consider how pointless it is to heed the inner admonitions of God, or outer admonitions of men, if you fail to put them into action. 7 – Detest your former sins so that you never commit them again. 8 – Do not think that you are pleasing God until you are displeasing to yourself. 9 – Do not think that you love and believe in Christ unless He is present within you. 10 – Strongly resist your vicious passions, especially when first they arise, for everyone who has a mind to do so can overcome them. 11 – Lay down a firm foundation of virtue, to prevent endless wavering thereafter. 12 – Become familiar with death by thinking about it daily, and making it the object of your meditations, so that in the end you may come to fear it less.

This is the way to that life which is devoid of death. Let everyone now look to his own conscience, and ascertain whether he possesses within himself those signs of Predestination which will lead him unerringly to Heaven. The way of the wicked may seem well-paved and smooth now, but it will in the end lead to Hell and darkness (*Ecclesiasticus* 21). Its gates are so wide open, the path there so smooth and pleasant, and so many flock there to their damnation, that our own eyes may bear witness to what Christ so rightly said: the gate to perdition is wide, and the path leading thereto spacious, and many there are, many and more, who enter therein. Many authors have written of how, in a vision of ecstasy, a

certain anchorite saw souls falling into hell like snowflakes or raindrops. The damned (as is related by the Portuguese Orator: Philippus Diez, *Tom. V, conc. 2 die Beatissimae Virginis ad Nives*. S. Antoninus, III, 24, 9, § 2. Hieronymus Platus, *De bono status religiosi*, I, 15)⁴³ could not believe how many of them there were, amazed that anyone could be left in the world; for there were such multitudes of tormented souls in that place that it was scarcely to be believed that any could remain above.

Bertold of Regensburg⁴⁴, the Franciscan brother famed in Germany in years past for his preaching, was once inveighing against a particular vice when a woman in the congregation, suffering terrible pangs of conscience, became so afraid at what she was hearing that she fell down as if dead in the midst of the throng. But being restored to life by the prayers of the assembly, she said that she had stood before the tribunal of God, where there were gathered 60,000 dead souls of all sorts, Christian as well as heathen: and of these, a mere three were sent to Purgatory, all the rest being condemned to eternal hellfire. How true it is, that MANY enter through the wide and spacious door to perdition! Drawing on a true sense of Christ, St John Chrysostom says that the inhabitants of Hell are many, and those of the Kingdom of Heaven few, although Heaven is larger. 'How many,' he asks, 'of you who dwell in this city believe that you are saved? What I have to say will not please you, but still I shall say it: of so many thousands, only one hundred will be saved, and I even wonder whether I am not too generous in my reckoning. How much malice is there among the young? How much indifference among the old?' Such were the words of John Chrysostom, that most wise and holy man and Doctor of the Church, that light of the world, speaking of the populous city of Antioch at a time when the spirit of the early Church had not yet quite waned (*Homilies*, 24, III, & 40, V, *On the Acts of the Apostles*). Who should then wonder at St Paul's solicitous warning: 'Work out your salvation in fear and trembling' (*Philippians* 2) or the exhortation of Christ Himself to strive to enter by the narrow door (*Luke* 13)? The Truth calls to all of us to strive with all our might, by penitential good works, to enter that narrow door (*1 Corinthians* 9, *Galatians* 5, *Colossians* 3, *Matthew* 3). The hesitant and the frivolous will not enter therein: it is a task requiring the greatest vigilance, and he who wishes to enter must overcome obstacles with a firm intention of the mind, as St Gregory (*Moralia*, II, 26) and Bede both attest. Unless a man is able to overcome himself he will slide back from the narrow door and be unable to enter in, so great are the concupiscent urges of the unruly flesh and the temptations and persecutions stirred up by the Devil and the world against those who strive to enter by that narrow way. Just as an oarsman must labour all the harder when he is rowing against the current, those who undertake the task

of steering their souls towards Heaven in spite of the enemy must summon all the virtue they possess to fight violence with greater violence, lest their souls be swept away like little boats into incorrigible error. 'Wake up from your stupor as you should and leave sin alone' (*1 Corinthians* 15). Watchful only are those who always and everywhere live their lives as if the present day is the last they will ever see, wasting not a moment; those who in all their thoughts and deeds look to their conscience as if this day were their dying day. Let us therefore do today what hereafter we would regret not having done: 'Whatever someone sows, that is what he will reap. If his sowing is in the field of self-indulgence, then his harvest from it will be corruption; if his sowing is in the Spirit, then his harvest from the Spirit will be eternal life' (*Galatians* 6).

END

SUMMA PRIVILEGII *CAESAREI*

WE, Ferdinand II, by the grace of God elected Holy Roman Emperor, &c., renew, extend and grant to Raphael Sadeler this privilege in the Imperial gift: that for a period of no less than ten years no image of either large or small size in this book is to be replicated in copper or other form; no engraving by him or his sons in the future is to be copied for distribution in either wood or copper in whatever manner, neither in part nor the whole; neither printed nor engraved among other works, on pain of incurring the displeasure of Our Imperial Majesty, the loss of the copier's work, and the forfeit of twelve pounds in weight of pure gold, to be paid without possibility of remission partly into the Imperial Treasury, partly to Sadeler and his sons.

Ferdinandus.

MONACHII.

Ex formis Anna Bergia viduae.



Apud RAPHAELEM SADE-
LERVM Iconographum
Ducalem venalis.

M DC XXII.

Cum facultate Superiorum,

Notes

- 1 Nikephoros (Nicephorus) Gregoras (c.1292–1360), Byzantine scholar, theologian and astronomer, librarian at the court of Andronicus II Palaeologus (1259–1332), Emperor of Byzantium.
- 2 Aulus Gellius (c.125–c.180), Roman grammarian and antiquarian.
- 3 Apion ‘Grammaticus’ (c.20 BC–c.48 AD), Graeco-Egyptian rhetorician, grammarian and Homeric scholar.
- 4 John Chrysostom (c.349–407), Archbishop of Constantinople, liturgist and Early Church Father celebrated for the beauty of his rhetoric (*chrysostomos* = ‘golden-mouthed’).
- 5 Gaius Julius Solinus (fl. mid-4th century AD), Roman grammarian and historian.
- 6 Thascius Caecilius Cyprianus (c.208–258), Bishop of Carthage and theologian, martyred at Carthage.
- 7 Theophylact of Ohrid (c.1050–c.1110), Archbishop of Ohrid (in modern-day Macedonia), exegete, scholar and pedagogue.
- 8 Jean Gerson (1363–1429), French theologian, Chancellor of the University of Paris, scholar, educator and poet.
- 9 Innocent I, pope from 401 to 417.
- 10 Hilarion (c.291–c.371), anchorite, emulator of St Anthony of Alexandria.
- 11 Gennadius of Marseille (d. c.496), priest, scholar, historian and biographer.
- 12 Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator (c.490–c.583), Consul of the Roman Empire, statesman and educationalist.
- 13 Stilpo of Megara (d. c.280 BC), Greek logician, dialectician and ethicist, tutor of Zeno of Citium.
- 14 Demetrius I, (337–283 BC), King of Macedon.
- 15 Bias of Priene (6th century BC), Greek philosopher and epigrammatist, one of the ‘Seven Sages of Greece’.
- 16 Ludovicus Blosius (Louis de Blois, 1506–66), Flemish mystic and divine.
- 17 Mark the Anchorite of Athens (5th century), mystic and divine.
- 18 Themistocles (c.524–459 BC), the ‘Glory of the Law’, Athenian general, politician and statesman.
- 19 Athanasius of Alexandria (c.293–373), theologian, Bishop of Alexandria, Church Father, Doctor of the Catholic Church.
- 20 Flavius Claudius Julianus ‘the Apostate’ (331–363), philosopher, man of letters, scholar, Roman Emperor from 355 to 363. Julian the Apostate was the subject of Drexel’s first published work, a five-act tragedy staged in Munich in 1608.
- 21 Salminius Hermias Sozomenus (c.400–c.450), historian of the early Christian Church.
- 22 Apelles of Kos (4th century BC), celebrated Greek painter: no works have survived.
- 23 Isidore of Seville (c.560–636), Archbishop of Seville, early Christian scholar and philosopher.

- 24 Gregory of Nazianzus (c.329–390), Archbishop of Constantinople, theologian, philosopher and rhetorician.
- 25 Cilicia: ancient name for a south-east coastal region of Asia Minor, on the Mediterranean. Anazarbus was one of its cities.
- 26 Caesarius of Arles (468/470–542), Bishop of Arles, ecclesiastic and scholar, strongly influenced by Augustine.
- 27 *Imitatio Christi*, manual of spiritual devotion published anonymously c.1418. The author, Thomas à Kempis (c.1380–1471), monk, was an adherent of the German-Dutch Brethren of the Common Life.
- 28 That is, Aristotle.
- 29 Lucius Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius (c.240–c.320), early Christian rhetorician, statesman, tutor and advisor to Constantine I.
- 30 Marcus Velleius Paterculus (c.19 BC–c.31 AD), Roman historian and statesman.
- 31 Phocion 'the Good' (c.402–c.318 BC), Athenian statesman.
- 32 Rufinus of Aquileia (Tyrannius Rufinus, c.345–410), theologian, historian and translator of patristic texts from Greek into Latin.
- 33 Paschasius Radbertus (785–865), Frankish abbot and theologian; Pelagius of Laodicea (d. after 381), anti-Arian theologian; Palladius of Galatia (368–d. before 431), historian and biographer of John Chrysostom.
- 34 Mardochus (Mordecai), cousin of Esther in the Book of Esther.
- 35 Polybius (c.200–118 BC), Hellenistic Greek historian.
- 36 Antiochus IV 'Epiphanes' (c.215–163 BC), ruler of the Seleucid Empire from 175 to 163 BC.
- 37 The Euripus Strait separates the Aegean island of Euboea from Boeotia on the Greek mainland.
- 38 Louis of Granada (1505–88), Dominican theologian and preacher, noted for his ascetic writings.
- 39 Epictetus (55–135 AD), Greek Stoic philosopher.
- 40 St Paula (347–404), early Desert Mother: her daughter St Blaesilla (d. 384) adopted her version of ascetic spirituality.
- 41 St Prosper of Aquitaine (c.390–c.455), theologian, popularizer and defender of St Augustine.
- 42 Probatic Pool (*Piscina Probatica* = 'sheep pool'), situated in the Bethesda sheep market in Jerusalem, scene of Jesus's healing of the infirm man (*John* 5: 1–9).
- 43 'The Portuguese Orator': Philippus (Felipe) Diez 'Lusitanus' (1550–1601), Portuguese Franciscan theologian and preacher. Drexel's other references are to St Antoninus of Florence (1389–1459), Dominican Archbishop of Florence, theologian and historian; and Hieronymus Platus (Girolamo Piatti SJ, 1545–91), Milanese Jesuit theologian.
- 44 Bertold of Regensburg (c.1220–1272), German Franciscan preacher whose vernacular sermons form the canonical core of Middle High German prose.

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